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# *Sex, Surrealism, Dali and Me*

*The Memoirs of Carlos Lozano by Clifford Thurlow*

Salvador Dali was one of the great personalities of the 20th century. Artist, intellectual, raconteur, a gifted writer and film-maker, he led his life as if upon a stage surrounded by the rich, famous, the bizarre and the beautiful.

Dali was also a voyeur with an irrational fear of being touched by others and with sexual eccentricities he shared with a select few. One of those special friends was Carlos Lozano, an actor from Colombia, who met the painter in Paris at the age of twenty. Dali secured him work as a dancer in the musical *Hair* and they remained intimate until Dali's death twenty-five years later.

Behind the public persona, the role Dali played, was another personality, the naughty boy, the trickster, the Magician, and in Carlos Lozano he found a playmate.

Carlos entered the «Court of the Divine» and reveals here for the first time a rich and authoritative portrait of the passions and obsessions that governed Salvador Dali's life and work. While those obsessions are uncovered in mesmerising detail, with humour and complete honesty, it is the human qualities of Carlos Lozano's memoir that make the story of their long association so appealing. Dali's weaknesses and contradictions are carefully laid bare against the joy and exhilaration he brought to those in the charmed inner circle.

Stylishly chronicled by the award-winning writer Clifford Thurlow, this will undoubtedly be one of the most important biographies to appear in this opening year of the new millennium. Laugh, scream in outrage, gasp in wonder, you will not be able to resist this book.



Clifford Thurlow

# **Sex, Surrealism, Dali and Me**

**The Memoirs of Carlos Lozano**

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In memory of  
Hal Landers

There are many here among us  
Who feel that life is but a joke  
But you and I we've been through that  
And this is not our fate  
So let us not talk falsely now  
The hour is getting late

BOB DYLAN

## ***Foreword***

*Sex, Surrealism, Dalí and Me* tells the story of two remarkable men—Salvador Dalí and his ambassador in Cadaqués, the Colombian dancer and gallery owner Carlos Lozano.

First published by Razor Books in 2000, the launch party was held at the Dalí Universe, a museum on the South Bank of the Thames in London. It was a warm June evening, the river turning orange in the sunset, and 400 friends came from all over the world for a surreal night of nostalgia and champagne decadence.

Half naked girls served *hors d'oeuvres* shaped as lobsters and melting watches. There was a midget masquerading as Dalí and the *de rigueur* transsexual dressed as a Victorian duchess. Sue Guinness was the perfect hostess and Rolling Stones' guitarist Keith Richards, who had crossed swords with Carlos Lozano in the sixties over the ownership of an Afghan coat, appeared «to apologise», Carlos whispered.

Carlos looked splendid, thin and ascetic in a white suit with a long wine red scarf that almost reached the floor. He posed for the cameras. He drank champagne, knowing that he shouldn't. With extravagant messages and bold signature, he signed copies of the book we had written, the testament to an amazing life he knew was drawing to a close. Six weeks later, Carlos Lozano died aged 52 from liver failure in Figueres—the rural town where Salvador Dalí was born.

I had first met Carlos at his art gallery in Cadaqués, the Spanish fishing village where Dalí had built a maze-like dwelling from a row of fishing cottages overlooking the bay of Port Lligat. Carlos spoke often of the great voyeur, game player and *provocateur*, his words guarded, as if there were something painful or private he wanted to conceal.

When The Hayward Gallery showed a Dalí retrospective the following year, Carlos stayed with me in London. By this time, I had read countless articles and books about the painter. Inspired by the show, Carlos began to talk more openly and, as he talked, I came to see that he had a far deeper, more intimate understanding of the artist's life and work than anything I had encountered. For such a multi-dimensional character, the chronicles had been modestly one dimensional.

Carlos agreed to put his memories on tape and the picture that emerged was a double exposure: the remembrances of Salvador Dalí set in counterpoint to his own extraordinary life, a journey from the humble backstreets of Barranquilla in Colombia to New York, Paris and the Court of the Divine.

I was thankful that Carlos lived to see the book that emerged from those tapes in English, although it was sad that he missed the celebrations that marked its publication in Spain. There were more than fifty pages of essays, articles and critiques in the Spanish press and, mimicking Dalí, I told friends I was «measuring rather than reading the reviews». *Sexo, Surrealismo, Dalí y Yo* spent several weeks in the top-ten best-seller lists. Among the various translations, for reasons that can only be described as surreal, with a grant from the European Union to revitalise publishing in Romania, the book was published by Editura Universal Dalsi in 2003 and launched with a party at the British Consulate in Bucharest. From Ceausescu to Dalí in a decade. What a marvellous sense of humour.

The non-English editions of the book have a new last chapter, included here for the first time. It describes the last weeks of Carlos's life, the bell chiming for his death in Cadaqués, and the journey of his ashes to the River Ganges in India. It creates, as Spain's leading newspaper *El País* noted, «the unique circumstances in which the storyteller becomes the ghost and the ghostwriter finds his voice».

CLIFFORD THURLOW  
Cadaqués, August 2011



## *Endings*

Dalí, dear...

They drank champagne the day you died.

There had been a storm. A cloud was hanging over the bay like an old worn blanket that had frayed at the edges, the sun's light penetrating in shafts that dappled the sea. The stone streets were clean, washed by the afternoon rain. The air smelled sweet. The smell of a virgin you would have said. Or the smell of buggery. Something funny. How you loathed all smells but your own.

Small birds darted in circles, swirling overhead like poignant memories. I listened for the nightingales but there were none. As the light slowly vanished, the cafés on the waterfront filled with men who had stories to tell. «What did he ever do for the village?». I heard someone say. «When we needed him he turned his back on us...». A terrible weight had lifted from their shoulders. They drank champagne and laughed their fishermen laughs. Warm breath misted the windows. Two boys on motorcycles roared away along the coast road and the silence that followed made it feel as if the whole world was empty.

I walked through the winter chill, down the track from the olive groves, round by the house. I could see the eggs on the roof, the camel in shadow, the old fishing boat with a cypress tree growing through its hull. The waves were black. Night had come in Cadaqués. It was the 23rd of January 1989.

The sun would rise tomorrow.

The funeral service two days later was at the church in Figueres where you were christened eighty-four years before. It is a modest church like many in small Spanish towns; Gothic in style, not age, built to oppress. Melancholic saints whose deeds we learned at

Sunday school stare down from the walls; the Saviour below a sheet of glass, poorly painted, and Mary, her golden heart bursting from her breast amidst a circle of protruding daggers, a scene that must have moved your eye and playful mind long before you gasped in wonder at the marvels of Hieronymus Bosch.

Like the church, the service was a dismal affair conducted by a weary man with scant hair and all the feeling of the statues carved from stone. It was unworthy of Salvador Dalí. Love him, hate him, he was what he was and deserved something else, not better but other. «I practise but do not believe», you said and I have seen your words quoted many times since. You were proudly orthodox: Católico Apostólico Romano, you told the world, but the only time I saw you in God's house was for the music concerts in Cadaqués and even then you crept out to visit me at the art gallery I had opened nearby. I had called it Cledalique. You gave me the name: the Key to Dalí, you explained, and no one quite understood.

The coffin sat before the altar; uncommonly plain, dark wood, narrow at the feet. Just right for a Catalan bourgeois. «I have betrayed my class», you gravely intoned. «I have joined the aristocracy». They made you the Marqués de Pubol. You loved it. But a duke you would rather have been.

I whispered the words of the litany. They meant nothing to me. The priest spoke of the other world. The smell of damp and unwashed clothing mingled with the melting wax of the candles. A man in front of me was coughing, blowing his nose, sneezing into a handkerchief. You would have moved away, terrified of germs, not of what people may have said or thought. *Qué hablen*. «Let them talk. I want everyone to talk of Dalí. Even if they speak well of him».

The coffin was carried out by men in uniform and the mob followed your progress across the street to Torre Galatea, the annex to the *Teatro Museo* where you had envisioned rows of scholars from all over the world, their heads bowed into books of Dalinian philosophy. I could see the house where you were born and the hospital where you died, the church and the museum across the way forming the four corners of the box from which you sprang and into which you were now recoiling. The journey was as short as it was long, as brief as history will make it eternal.

I wore a red tie. And a purple shirt that matched the drapes in that cramped forlorn room where you lay in state like a comic king, a waxworks dummy with creased white skin and a fallen moustache that had withered. The men in grey suits had taken over. They knew nothing of your needs for date juice, fresh cream, the satiny semen of the tuberose.

«Always wear a tie, Carlitos. It is the symbol of success». That red tie whispered anarchy; anarchy on a plain of royal purple silk. You would have raised a wicked eye-brow in subtle acknowledgement.

I had no tears in me. Just a Buddhist prayer in that Spanish scene of Catholic chaos. Louis XIV was dry eyed, empty eyed, distraught. She leaned on my arm and we looked down at the waxworks shell that had once been Salvador Dalí. Only Arturo Caminada wept. Openly. Manly. For forty years he had served you as driver, handyman, man's man, as lover long ago for Gala, the wife you loved beyond the distance of touch or desire. For forty years he answered your call only to be omitted from the will so cleverly written to confuse and cretinize. A surrealist gesture.

Amanda Lear was absent. She was your greatest achievement, the boy who became the girl every girl wanted to be and every man desired. She was your very own Frankenstein, but all monsters forsake their master. I missed her. I despised the men in grey suits and the men in blue uniform. I despised them for you. You said once: «I have a dream, a vision, and every day it changes. That is the nature of genius».

Remember my hair, Don Salvador? It swept the base of my spine that spring in 1969 when we met at the Hôtel Meurice and every year it got shorter. «I measure my life by the length of your hair, Violetera», you told me and I ran my palm over the soldier's crop the day they buried you. I must let it grow a little longer.

Louis XIV's grip on my arm grew tighter. In the gossip columns we had long admired photographs of Nanita Kalaschnikoff among the world's most wicked and wonderful; we would read about her husband's origins in the Russian nobility, his connection with that awful gun so beloved by terrorists. She was a Princess, a Spanish beauty with an uncanny resemblance to the Bourbon monarchs and,

in the Court of Salvador Dalí, Princess Nanita was always Louis XIV.

«The king is coming», you would say and that day when the yacht sailing into Cadaqués carried King Juan Carlos you said in the same tone: «The king is coming», and fell reverently to your knees where you remained for an hour.

«The difference between me and the Surrealists is that I am a surrealist». It was more than mere boast.

The king was subdued behind dark glasses, chic in Chanel black, her Bourbon chin raised, necklaces in countless coils around her long fine neck, a few bangles silent on her wrist. We stood there together. Just the two of us in that stuffy room with the purple drapes. The coffin seemed too narrow, even for your minute shrunk form. They had broken your arm in numerous places to make it rest. You were stabbing the air, reaching for life, reaching forward. There is no future beyond the grave you once remarked but still I said my Buddhist prayer. I had learned in India that the soul hovers over the body for three days before parting on the long journey to its next incarnation. I wished you well. I cry when a cat dies but I did not cry in Torre Galatea, the building you named for Gala. I felt a sense of relief that was little different from the champagne drinkers of Cadaqués. It was as if a door had closed and another now was sure to open. I felt free. I had known you for half my life and your shadow that clung like a leaden shroud to my own had finally lifted. I had loved you; occasionally hated you. You inspired these opposing emotions like a strict father and, in a way, that's just what you were, my father, the father I had never had and had wanted so dearly, my teacher, my spiritual lover, a perverter, a spoiler, a loyal friend and an awesome enemy.

I took a last look around the room. There were two ugly wreaths that must have been chosen by the Catalan peasants who witnessed your will, but no tuberoses. How little they knew you. Others were pressing to enter, gawkers more than mourners. We filed out and they hurried in. Someone took a photograph. «Photographs allow you to live twice», you once said with rare passion.

Outside, the sky was overcast still. «I think we're going to see some rain», said A. Reynolds Morse cheerfully and we shook hands. He was wearing a tie with your painting *The Enigma of William Tell* stretched along its length.

«I love your tie. It's adorable», I told him.

«I must send you one», he replied.

Eleanor Morse looked positively antique, like a dried prune, like a dinosaur, the facelifts American women wear so well collapsed now like an unwound ball of string. Her hand was small and crinkled like an autumn leaf.

On his head Mr Morse displayed a cowboy hat. «They - are - so - American», you would say with long pauses between each word. «Did - you - know, Madame - Morse - keeps - paintings - in - the - pee-pee - room...».

And I remember you telling us how you first met the plastics millionaire, your most famous collector, a man with his very own Dalí museum in St Petersburg, Florida.

It was at the St Regis Hotel in New York in the 1950s, the innocent years. In the pee-pee room, naturally. They stood side by side in the row of polished white urinals. «What was he doing there? Soliciting? Masturbating? Shaking his limousine like a man with lucky dice?».

Dalí focused his small black determined eyes and gave Reynolds Morse his maniac stare.

«You must be an artist?», said the American, undeterred.

«I - am - the - gre - eat - tsssst», Dalí confirmed.

They buttoned their flies in unison and went off to find Madame Morse in the lobby. The three of them went up to the suite the Dalís occupied for a few months every year for forty years and, before the day was out, the Dalís had worked their magic. Reynolds Morse signed a cheque for the first of what was to become the largest collection of Dalí oils in the world.

The friendship was long without being deep. He saw them as a «trick», habitual buyers, as every whore in every bordello has her regulars. It was Dalí's favourite metaphor: «I am a prostitute. I don't want to know the client. I just want my money. I love money. Lots of money. My seed rises into the glorious eruption of a majestic orgasm when I picture the Divine Dalí rolling in a bed of money». It was André Breton, the formidable leader of the Surrealists, who made the anagram Avida Dollars from Salvador Dalí and was he offended? Not in the least. He confessed his lusts with disdain.

«Every day before I start work I have to see a big cheque on the

breakfast tray...».

We parted. The rain Reynolds Morse had predicted was in the air although its promise was not fulfilled and I never did receive that adorable William Tell tie.

We pressed on Ana Maria Dalí, your sister, stood with her companion and a court of grieving women all old and hunched, as haughty as crows. Our greeting was brief. Like my own eyes, Don Salvador, your sister's eyes were dry. It had been five years since you had last seen her and forty years and more since you were friends. She had kept some drawings you had sketched as a boy and she wrote a book about your childhood you claimed would sully the myths you had so assiduously spun. She had cashed in on the Divine's fame. It was unforgivable and, if you ever could have forgiven her, Gala could not.

We turned into the path of Peter Moore, the dear Captain, a pale version of yourself, the master of mass production, an accomplice in the confusion but a mourner, surely not. «Come», said Louis XIV, sensitive, even in her sorrow.

We moved on, surrounding ourselves with strangers. They were smiling, laughing, smoking, enjoying themselves. God is present in people's happiness. The lens of a TV camera roamed the faces in arbitrary sweeps and I thought of psychopaths in small American towns who shoot at school children in playing fields. A director with a clipboard and beard was shouting instructions. The men in grey suits were everywhere, not one or two but fifty or more, Madrid officials, Catalan officials, advisers, lawyers, Figueres councillors, accountants, tax experts and, finally, grinning and uncomfortable, the worthies of Cadaqués, our little pueblo by the sea. Not a peseta in cash remained in Dalí's bank accounts. But there were three hundred million dollars in works of art and everyone wanted a piece of the pie.

The tears still rolled down Arturo's cheeks. He watched as the sightseers filed into the room in the Torre Galatea. He waited till the last had taken a glimpse of your shrivelled form and then he hid your face with the cloth he clutched in his fingers like a holy relic. I understood Arturo's distress. It wasn't for what he had not received that he wept, but what the men in grey had demanded. He had made a promise before you and before God that when you died he

would cover your face immediately but that was inappropriate for the script. It was your wish, not theirs.

Robert Descharnes, the last of your business secretaries, had taken a mould of your face, just as they had done with Napoleon, the man you wanted to be at six, before you wanted to be a chef at seven, and before you settled on being Dalí. Imagine what the face of Don Salvador will be worth in bronze? Just a limited edition, of course, fifty, say: fifty for Spain, fifty for France, fifty for the United States, for Hong Kong, Japan, the Philippines, South America, where I was born, where the butterflies were too big and where Somerset Maugham waited in vain for your visit. You fooled the world, Don Salvador, but others are laughing now.

I told Louis XIV a story. One day, in the summer of 1970, I was standing naked in the studio, the light behind me, the sun glinting on the waves in Port Lligat. Dalí was pleased with the study on the easel and exasperated with the roughs that littered the floor. He called Arturo. «Get rid of this rubbish. Burn it», he instructed and, as we left the room, the faithful servant proceeded to gather the discarded sheets.

A year or more passed and Dalí mentioned wistfully the work he had thrown away so rashly, so uncharacteristically. Arturo had just opened a bottle of pink champagne. The light was fading from the August sky. He hurried off in his eager peasant way and returned with the drawings in a neat roll tied with string. He grinned as he handed it over and Dalí acted as if he wasn't pleased but all three of us knew he was.

Louis XIV smiled. «He was a monster. But divine», she said.

Arturo dried his eyes as he sealed the coffin and it was taken out again into the street where a strange and unsettling thing took place: the people cheered. They clapped their hands. And waved their hats.

«Olé! Olé!».

It was a fiesta. They cheer when a matador dies in the bull ring. «Torero, torero», they proudly cry. «Bravo, bravísimo». It is an honour for a bullfighter; a surrealist honour for a painter, I told myself, although for just a moment I felt shame in my Spanish roots transplanted as they were across the centuries to Barranquilla. Your

funeral, Don Salvador, was a Happening and I made myself remember happier times, another Happening, the day we threw paint at canvases in Granollers and retired together like matadors to the brothel.

I had been asked to be a pallbearer forty-eight hours earlier when Dalí died. It was his friends who were to carry him. Even that had become an official act. A photo opportunity. The men in grey suits were omnipresent with sombre expressions and sensible shoes, islands of the mundane in a sublime and surreal sea.

The parade shuffled by the statues outside the museum, in through the double doors and around the old Cadillac that had first taken me over the sinewy mountain road to Cadaqués. We entered the auditorium where the gravediggers had prepared a marble-lined hole in the theatre's ancient foundations. They lowered the narrow coffin on new ropes, the mob solemn, not sad. I dropped a tiny yellow *immorta* into the grave and it was now that tears welled into my eyes. «My magic will protect you always», you promised and now you were gone.

Gala, lover, manager, protector, wife of half a century, was waiting for you in a tomb at the country château in Pubol and I know as surely as I know all essence turns to putrescence that it is there where you wanted to be, at her side, with your little bee whose metier was to sting for you both.

But I understood. I am older than I was twenty years ago. I knew why the mayor wanted to keep you in Figueres. It was where you were born, after all, where you had died, where you went to school, where you terrified your little sister and worried the notary, your father, proud and bemused by the genius son he had named in memory of the brother you never knew, the Salvador who died in childhood and haunted you always. They wanted you right there, in the *Teatro Museo*, where the tourists go, in Spain's most popular place of artistic pilgrimage after the Prado.

«It was his dying wish», Mayor Mariano Lorca told the men in suits and they saw no advantage in arguing. They had come, not for the bones, but the body of work you had left to «the State», as every Catalan says with a hearty spit when they speak of all things Castilian. The politicians were huddling for a compromise. The paintings would be scattered into museums in Madrid and



Barcelona. The château in Pubol, the *Teatro Museo Dalí* and Torre Galatea will remain the property of «the State». And the house where we played out the summers in Port Lligat? The worthies of Cadaqués, bright eyed from the many bottles of champagne, had their fingers crossed.

They covered the hole with a sheet of grey stone. «There's no inscription», Louis XIV remarked and I nodded. Everything had been improvised; rushed. A low cordon of rope kept the tourists from walking over your grave but that proved unsatisfactory and so, with a surrealism that was painfully unintentional, they dug you up and moved you once again.

You are at rest now in a quiet place, in a passage between the museum and Torre Galatea. Away from the bustle. Away from the noise. Away from Gala.

There were two receptions at different hotels and the dignitaries assembled like generals planning battle. The muddle will go on for years. That was what you wanted.

Louis XIV continued to hold my arm and we wandered down the Ramblas to the Astoria. You were always happy there, laughing at the tourists, eating cheese and honey, going on about flies and *Millet's Angelus*, sipping *Vichy Catalan*.

I drank a brandy; then another. We talked of other things. Louis XIV was returning to her house in Marbella. «Perhaps I'll go to New York for a while», she said. «Or Paris?».

«Pandora wants me to visit. She's in California», I said.

Louis XIV shivered. «It will be warm there».

We walked to the station and kissed before parting.

You once made the uniquely generous donation of \$10,000, not to charity, but to an institute researching cryogenics, the method of preserving bodies on ice in order to revive them when medical science was ready to give them longer life. You were afraid of death and forever irritated knowing that when you had gone the world would still be turning without you.

I visit the museum, Don Salvador. Every month or so. I take a tuberose and leave it in the quiet passage where no one goes and I remember the past, the parties, the promise you always kept.

## *Beginnings*

He could undress you just with a look and that was what he did. I felt shy and embarrassed, but also excited. This was Salvador Dalí. It was a miracle. I had been in Paris only four days and there I was at the Princes' and Paupers' Tea at the *Hôtel Meurice*.

For Dalí, it was avarice at first sight. He had taken one glance around the room and decided: That's what I want. I was the prey and he was the hunter in search of fresh meat, young flesh that fulfilled obligatory criteria: I was pretty, just turned twenty, with smooth cheeks that had yet to make the acquaintance of a razor blade, dark brown eyes and brown hair that fell to my waist. I was wearing red hipster flares with red and yellow fringes over green boots decorated with moons and stars, and an Apache waistcoat with coloured beads that danced on the ends of leather thongs.

It was April 12th 1969. Paris was warm and below the waistcoat I wore nothing but my Colombian skin softly bronzed by faraway suns and bare of body hair. There was a dash of patchouli oil on my temples and a whisper of kohl about my eyes.

The Spanish Ambassador to France, a famous fascist, kissed my hand as he left the gathering. «*Au revoir, Mademoiselle*», he said with a bow and Dalí was delighted.

«Angels are androgynes», he explained. «I will inspect your back. You will have scars where they cut off your wings. You have the most glorious navel. It is the privilege of princes to show their navel. I will decorate it with a ruby...».

He had taken me by the arm and we moved at a fast pace around the salon. «Have you seen this glorious belly button?», he asked the woman all in white as she approached and then he turned to make a formal introduction. «This is la Contessa», he said with a twinkle. «May I present the Prince of Nature».

We touched cheeks and blew kisses into the void.

Others moved by us like trees seen from a train carriage: Louis XIV - Nanita Kalaschnikoff, who would become my great friend — with her amber eyes like a cat; a boy with a blank expression playing a small stringed instrument; a photographer attached to a calling card; Mijanou Bardot, the cushionmaker, sister of the movie star Dalí condemned in a voice from another century: «Can you imagine Ava Gardner in blue jeans?». There was Captain Peter Moore, a small man, Dalí's business manager, on the end of a lead being led by an ocelot and I remembered seeing them wild in the jungles as a boy. The Captain's blazer was immaculate and the sharp creases in his trouser legs could have diced onions for a soup. There were book buyers and print buyers and a man with an idea for Dalí flavoured ice cream whom Dalí contemptuously ignored. I was the chosen one. I had been procured as, in time, I would become the procurer.

«You have a wonderful skeleton, my Angel. *C'est colossal*. When you die, only the skeleton remains. A doctor in Barcelona keeps the skeleton of his dead wife in his surgery. He is a utopian savage». We sat and he stuck a long thin finger into my navel.

I was thrilled to the point of enrapture. Dalí, I would learn, was only a voyeur, the great masturbator, but his inclination was decidedly pederast. He liked inexperienced boys, androgynes particularly, transsexuals explicitly. He bathed in the bizarre, the unnatural, the surreal; he had orgasms over the outrageous, the lascivious and lewd. He was enthralled by Le Pétomane, the French music hall performer whose act consisted of nothing but farting and he loved farting himself. «The French live to eat. I eat to fart».

«All excrement can be turned into gold!», he exclaimed to la Contessa - Marie-Claire de Montaignac, «the girl with the most beautiful arse in Paris», who had come to join us on the sofa. «Do you study your own shit?».

«Doesn't everyone?», she replied.

«Minutely?».

«Naturally».

«Is it firm? Is it dark ochre in colour like gold?».

«Always».

«Then it is royal shit you store in your colon», he proclaimed,

faintly brushing his lips over the back her hand before wiping them extravagantly on his sleeve. He was always charming; nearly always.

Twins arrived, young Englishmen named John and Dennis Myers, identical in tight little jackets with big collars, as winsome as Greek Gods. «Castor and Pollux», Dalí informed me. «*Bonjour*», he called.

They glanced at each other and wordlessly took drinks from a tray circling the room in the outstretched arms of a waiter who bore a distinct resemblance to Hitler. He had one of those awful moustaches and a wave of hair plastered to his forehead.

«*C'est colossal*», Dalí said. «I will put him in a film. I will show him as a kind man, a music lover, a marvellous painter. Hitler had the most wonderful sense of humour».

I didn't say very much but he didn't seem to notice. I was an empty vessel ready to be filled and Salvador Dalí was a gushing tide of ideas, sophistication, humour and absurdity. I was prepared for anything and everything was waiting for me.

Louis XIV approached in bravura décolleté and pendulous earrings like wayward stars below the Milky Way of the chandeliers. We came to our feet.

«*Monseigneur*», Dalí said, jerking his head, then tapping my shoulder. «This is Violetera».

We kissed. «What a wonderful smell», she exclaimed.

«Patchouli oil», Dalí told her and I was amazed that he should know, as I would always be amazed that he knew so much about so many things. «We shall take Violetera to the opera before it is too late». He turned to me. «You are the golden bloom that lights the dark labyrinths of the mind sewers. You should live and die like a flower...».

Then he began to sing: «Come and buy my lovely violets», in a sweet falsetto, proffering the invisible blooms, his face scarred suddenly by despair and hunger. Louis XIV joined in and they sang a duo.

The ocelot was chewing the gilt leg of a period chair and eyeing a little dog wearing bows in the arms of a woman on the interminable voyage from thirty-nine to forty, steering now a passage behind a cigarette in a holder two feet long. She was talking to a giant named Verushka, the Russian model, and a short

man with white hair and a white beard like a goat. His name was Edward James, the surrealist collector who had commissioned Dalí's lobster telephone before fleeing to South America where the butterflies were much too big. «The old queen's incontinent», Don Salvador would say each time he appeared, whisking me away as if age were a sickness, which to Dalí it was.

A girl with ballerina legs was standing on her head in the corner, her skirt forming a lamp-shade over her shoulders. Léonor Fini, the painter, an insatiable lesbian, studiously watched, her large hands framing her face, a portrait of bondage in studs, chains and black leather.

Castor and Pollux followed the waiter and Gala's predator eyes surveyed the scene like a hungry person looking at a menu. Like Don Salvador, she liked skinny, handsome young beaux with slim waists and broad chests and liked them more if they could play the piano. Gala seemed strangely normal among the exotics in a plain suit and her hair in the black bow Coco Chanel had given her. I never saw Gala without that bow and her hair in any style other than that worn by leading ladies in Hollywood films of the 1940s.

Dalí was wearing a dark blue velvet suit, a ruffled shirt, a medal on a ribbon and a colourful waistcoat decorated with a fine tracery of stains like coral reefs on the Caribbean Sea. His hair was over the collar, in harmony with the times. The previous year during the Paris riots, Dalí had been driven to the Sorbonne to give a lecture on the relationship between DNA and the spiral stalks in vegetables in a Cadillac filled to the roof with cauliflowers. The students had been overturning expensive cars but when they saw Dalí they cheered. He was a part of the movement, an anarchist to the anarchists; the Hippie Pope. «I can go anywhere. I shall always be safe».

We journeyed on through the music and smoke, the chatter of conversation, Dalí leading the way with a cane he held like a bishop's sceptre. It had once belonged to Sarah Bernhardt and when it was stolen he missed it like the limb the great tragedienne had amputated. «After they cut off her leg she kept performing her act. Genius is subtle. We find it only through our labour...». It was a lovely cane with a nude woman arching backwards to form the handle and he used it like a teacher to point around the room.

«She's a Rothschild. She must have swallowed a rat her breath's so bad. And the boy with no chin is the second son of a lord. The English upper classes are a lot of silly arses», he concluded in his dire merry English and was so surprised that I understood perfectly that he switched to French, which I barely understood at all.

There was a bowl of cherries on the table. He took two, joined at the stems, jiggled them, his eyes popping, and then dropped them in his mouth. «Too green», he said and spat them out. «They must be ripe like virgins and make juice like virgin's blood. Cherries are an aphrodisiac. They make men dream of incest. They awaken the cannibalistic desires of our atavistic impulses. I love cherries. The Virgin Mary was fourteen when Joseph the Carpenter was already forty. He was a Sugar Daddy».

Next to the cherries stood a bowl of tuberoses. «Put your finger inside», he said, pointing at one of the blooms. I did so and, feeling a sticky substance within, my face must have contorted and he burst into laughter. He then leaned over and whispered. «Just like a woman. Or so they say».

I smiled. We shared a secret.

We hurried on, drawing away from the ice cream man who kept advancing like the moon to the sun's magnetic orbit, Dalí talking now about the Virgin and Mother symbol. «It was divine wisdom to place them in one being. We do not need a pantheon like the Hindus and Aztecs». He stopped and studied me more closely. «Where are you from?», he then asked.

«Colombia», I replied. «Then California».

«No one told me your name?». They had but Dalí rarely listened.

«Carlos Lozano», I said.

His brow rippled and I knew instinctively that he was shuffling the name away for later assessment. He had the most incredible memory. He could quote reams of poetry, opera, street songs, minute details on the most complex of subjects. He played the fool and when people treated him as one he stunned them to silence with his brilliance.

«And what is Carlitos doing in Paris?».

«I'm an actor with the Living Theater», I answered and once more the words were stored away in the Carlos file. Without my

knowledge, Dalí that day began making plans for my future and, when those plans were made manifest, it was the best surprise of my life.

He was thinking. There was a quiet moment and then he said: «It is a regal name, a king's name. You have a luxurious subconscious. I am going to paint you...».

Edward James surfaced from behind the curtains like a genie from a bottle. Dalí turned away grabbing a plate of sandwiches that he ate with sudden passion, showering crumbs over his waistcoat, cheeks, the tips of the upturned moustache that embraced his nose like a pair of new moons. «A feast is made by the company it keeps», he said, glaring wildly at the retreating head of white hair.

The room had filled. There were flowers everywhere, tuberoses in bowls and in bouquets like infants in the arms of the late arrivals. The air was thick with cigarette smoke and the pungent perfume of opium. The musician was playing Indian music and a girl with bells around her ankles was dancing. This was my first European Happening and it was to last for twenty years.

Everyone was drinking champagne and red wine. There were trays of canapés. Someone passed Dalí a reefer shaped like a cone and he shrank away as if from a fizzing stick of dynamite. He never touched drugs and barely took more than a sip of wine. «I am already in that place where you all want to be. Satori is in here», he bragged, rubbing his temples.

An English girl loomed from the throng and, first dropping to one knee, she presented Dalí with a silver-topped cane that had once belonged to Winston Churchill, her great uncle, she said. «I will treasure it always», he told her, glaring for the photographer, passing the cane to one of the servants. He had a collection of walking sticks and they were all famous. Everyone in the room was famous, an actor, a duchess, a royal relation, a friend of rock stars. The more outlandish the more Dalí liked it. «God always enjoys a well told lie...».

Like a reflection in a mirror, Castor and Pollux still followed the waiter. One man had fallen into an inebriated trance in the corner, the girl on her head had come to her feet and was listening wide-eyed to Louis XIV. The King then led her away «to reveal life's great secrets», Dalí whispered.

The impeccable captain had gone and so had the ocelot. It was one of a pair that had been given as a gift to Dalí but one day, when exiting from the elevator at the *Hôtel Meurice*, «a - woman - with - an - American - accent» shrieked with delight when she saw the animals and failed to notice the man leading them. That night, the ocelots had a new keeper.

He squeezed my arm as we bent over a table to read a newspaper clipping. There was something for him to see, to sign, to approve, to castigate. I have Moon in Cancer, which makes me reflective, sensitive and romantic. I was happy to observe. I drank champagne. It was a long, long way from Barranquilla.

The smoke had become thicker, hanging like dense clouds around the chandeliers. There was a mood of stupefaction as if the people had congregated after some terrible disaster but Dalí, I realized, was in control. He sprinkled madness into the confusion like herbs into the cooking pot and stirred the brew like an alchemist.

I had arrived at six with the actors Jean-Pierre Kalfon and Pierre Clementi. It seemed as if a few minutes had passed and already it was seven thirty, the time the party came to an end. The routine was rigid, at the *Hôtel Meurice* in Paris; at the St Regis, in New York; at his summer house in Cadaqués, a pattern as cyclic as the seasons.

«It is the obsession of repetition the Gods take note of. Do you want to be a success?».

I nodded.

«Then I will teach you...».

Jean-Pierre was standing at the door. He motioned for me to accompany him as Dalí reappeared, cutting through the assembly with his cane and joining me once more. He put his hand on my arm.

«Will you come again tomorrow?», he asked.

«Of course», I replied.

His eyes were bright. He leaned forward: «Dalí's magic will always protect you», he said and left the salon with Gala.



## *The World*

They talk of people walking on air. I was walking on mystic impulses; on adrenalin fused with nitrous oxide; on joy. Small pebbles on the wayside turned to red roses. The street sweeper rode by on his broom and the fat man with the louche features in the Pernod sign winked at me. Old women were young again. The lines of chance had crossed in a remarkable conjunction.

«*Au revoir*», Jean-Pierre called and, as he strode away, the statues climbed down from their pedestals to greet him. I was in the domain of poets and madmen, the land of Onirus, the God of Dreams, as Dalí would teach me. «We spend one third of our lives on an oniric treasure island. You must build bridges to the mainland and follow me through the invisible passages that join the waking and dream states and lead to the realm where all contradictions reach a hyper-lucidity of irrationality. Dalí has merged the unconscious with the conscious through the submarine of the subconscious».

I gasped for breath.

«Surrealism is not a movement. It is a latent state of mind perceivable through the powers of dream and nightmare. It is a human predisposition. People ask me: What is the difference between the irrational and the surreal and I tell them: the Divine Dalí».

Pierre Clementi was beaming from the shade of a Mexican sombrero. «You're a hit», he said.

What a delightful lunatic he was. He had made movies with Pier Paolo Pasolini. He had just been signed for the title role in Bertolucci's *Steppenwolf*, and the people of Italy loved him with a passion. He once drew all his money from the bank, millions of lira,

and threw it away in handfuls in Piazza del Popolo in Rome.

He lit a Gauloise and the smell mingled with the street smells and Paris was everything I had imagined it was going to be. The trees running along the edge of the Seine were dappled with light as if painted by Cézanne. Two girls passed and they could have stepped straight from the palette of Renoir.

Paris is ancient and everlasting. The old stones give off an air of carnival debauchery. Deposed kings and plotting tyrants share the same café tables in somnambulant exile. The girls have boys' faces and the Eiffel Tower appears in the distance like an enormous insect descending from Mars. Everyone who was ever anything has lived in Paris. The light is there. Good Americans are sent there as a reward when they die. There was once a mad young writer named Alfred Jarry who celebrated the success of his play, *L'Ubu Roi*, by wandering through Montmartre shooting at birds on the rooftops. «Be careful, you nearly hit my son», said a woman walking with her child. «Do not worry, Madame, I will give you another one», he replied.

Paris is careless and deranged. I had arrived home. It was all coming true...

The previous evening I had peeked into the future with the Tarot cards and the timeless messages they had revealed were so uncannily accurate I suddenly had to pinch myself to make sure I was awake and not cruising in the Land of Onirus.

I had gone up to my little attic with a mass of conflicting fears and emotions. I felt optimistic without having anything solid to feel optimistic about. Just being young, being in love with life, was all that appeared to matter.

I lit a candle and took the cards down from the shelf. They were wrapped in blue silk, as I had been taught by Gypsy, the older woman who had entered my life, loved me fleetingly, and deserted me dramatically at sunrise that day. I held the cards for a few minutes, warming them, vibrating with them.

I shuffled the pack three times, my mind transcending the present and focusing on the white light that hovers over the invisible road ahead. I then cast a simple pattern, turning the cards forward, two forming a cross, four in a circle at the cardinal points, and one more turned down at the centre of the spread. I studied

each card individually, then the seven cards that completed the mandala.

The reading began with the Seven of Swords: Diana, the Virgin Goddess of the New Moon, a card that denotes the open mind in search of fulfilment. It was followed by the Five of Wands, representing life's common struggle; the Ten of Cups, the symbol of plenty; Temperance, revealing a winged angel pouring water from a gold to a silver chalice and signifying the power of those who shed their masks to become themselves; The Sun, the sign of inner light; Strength, the sign of inner fortitude gained through self-knowledge and represented by a lion; and, finally, The World, the last card in the Major Arcana, portraying an hermaphrodite and symbolizing my own ability to go out into the world, which is exactly what I had done.

I had left Colombia with my mother at the age of nine. I had left all dreams of being accepted by my father. I had left college in Los Angeles for the uncertain promise of the Haight-Ashbury hippie communes in San Francisco. I had left the West Coast to travel to New York with the Living Theater. And the Living Theatre had moved on from Paris to Toulouse to perform *Frankenstein*, the new show, without me. I had been left, not to starve, I realized, not to fail, not to fall beneath the wheel, but to flow with the turning of the wheel.

The message in the cards seemed clear and I resolved to shed all fears and doubts and be myself.

The spread was magical but the true depth of the magic would only be revealed years later when Dalí created his own Tarot cards with himself as The Magician; Gala as The Empress; Amanda Lear as an object of sexual desire mixing cocktails in the card for Temperance; and me as The Sun, appearing as a whimsical Apollo with tousled dark hair and sun browned skin. I remembered standing for the portrait for long hours in the studio, the sea behind me like an aquamarine tongue feeling around the rocky broken teeth of Port Lligat, Dalí hidden by his easel, engaged in his secret fantasies, and I remembered that attic room in Paris where the present began and the future became a galaxy of infinite charm and possibility.

I had been blown like a leaf on the winds of chance. My mother was

a poised and beautiful woman scarred by the random absurdities of life, by too much work and too little pleasure. She had been brutalized by the commonplace. There was another life out there in the distance and a tiny voice had been telling me to go and find it long before I was ever ready to listen. More than merely another day, tomorrow is another world. The past is an exploding planet, a black hole vanishing behind us in a cloud of dust that shapes the future. I had kissed her on the cheek. There were tears in her eyes and tears in my own eyes. A lake of tears. We now always spoke English together but it was oddly appropriate to say goodbye in Spanish. It was my roots that I was severing and our words were the spades and forks that dug them up. «*Adiós, hijo mío, adiós*». I was going away for a long, long time. But she knew that one day I would return.

I felt like Siddhartha leaving his father's palace as the *Greyhound* bus sped along the highway from Los Angeles to San Francisco. I had left my home, my place at City College, the friends who loved me and imprisoned me within the walls of the familiar. I was going simply to go. Life is a road that disintegrates behind us with each step we take. Only the present exists. I had been blessed with one of those natures which enjoys everything at the moment and I have always felt sorry for those people who find pleasure solely in retrospect and anticipation.

Spring was breaking the bonds of winter. Heavy rain and bright sunshine swept backwards and forwards across the bay like battling gladiators. San Francisco was the centre of the universe and Haight-Ashbury was the centre of the centre. The very air was charged with marijuana. A million miles of hair was growing from the heads of the young, enough hair to plait a rope that would tow us through the stars. LSD coloured the skyways. Everyone was turning on; tuning in; dropping out. People were greeting each other in the streets. Strangers kissed and passed joints from hand to hand like lucky amulets. We wore love beads and magic crystals, bangles and bells, bright outlandish clothes. We said «Peace» and «Love» with all the fervour of holy monks saying vespers.

And we meant it. A revolution was taking place, spontaneously, all over the world: the fashions of London's Kings Road; the student riots in Paris; the Baader-Meinhof gang in Germany; the Red Army

Brigades of Italy and the Flower Power Factions thriving in the United States and in tiny pockets all over Europe. All were linked by the growing pains of evolution and musically joined by Bob Dylan, the Doors, the Rolling Stones. We read Hermann Hesse, Hoppi legends and the *I Ching*. We listened to the Beatles and everyone agreed: All You Need Is Love. We were the Love Generation; the Peace Generation. To be there in Haight-Ashbury in 1969 was to be on the crest of a giant wave that was slowly spreading across the planet.

The draft papers that would send me to Vietnam would soon be following me across the State of California, but it was luck not artifice that kept me one jump ahead. I smoked pot. I tried acid. I tried everything. I lived in a commune with the city mayor's daughter; the beat poet Gregory Corso, who once sat up all night drinking a bottle of whisky as he read me his opus *Penguin Dust*, and an assortment of exotics with ravishing names: Peter Pan, Summer, Flower, Gandolf and Rainbow. We ate health foods and contemplated the stars and life was a magical mystery tour that took me one night to see a presentation by the Living Theater.

Now the Living Theater was not like anything I had seen before. I had been studying drama. I had appeared in college plays. But this was something else. The actors mingled with the crowd as the foyer filled and left the stage during the show to talk with members of the audience. They would touch people, hug them, squeeze their arms, creating reactions that broke down the walls between the performers and the playgoers. The message, on stage and off, was social and political. They wanted to change society, not merely entertain. They were anti-war, anti-Vietnam and, like Picasso, believed in the original ideals of communism. Julian Beck and Judith Melina, the creators of the company, had visions of a brotherhood of man that would embrace workers and artists in one grand anti-bourgeois, anti-establishment, anarchico-syndicalist family. The concept was not born from the hippie movement, but hippies adopted the Living Theater as an ally and a mouth piece.

From the moment the performance commenced, I thought: this is me, this is the future and, if I did say a little prayer, it was answered in an astonishingly short time. After the show, I stayed behind to talk to the cast and met Gypsy, a prehistoric bird,

burlesque and beautiful, Birgite Knade was the older woman, older than me by ten years or more, a German by birth and an alien by nature. There had been a programme on television at the time called *The Munsters* and Gypsy looked like the mother. Perhaps I was searching for a mother? She had the same intense, obsessed look as Dalí, a widow's peak that soared into an explosion of black hair, black eye make-up, black lips, black clothes, pale ghostly skin and green eyes that shone like the emerald in the ring my father wore when he walked along the quayside in Barranquilla in a white suit and in shoes sparkled by the shoeshine. What kind of man is it who deserts his first born son? Gabriel García Márquez whispered to me from the dark alleys of my childhood and in his spell bound words I would one day find many answers...

The Living Theater left the West Coast for New York with me as a novitiate member of the troupe and my life with Gypsy became a complex and bizarre audition. I was thrilled, amazed and bewildered. Gypsy taught me things I didn't know and invited me into those wet warm places I had imagined with the same fear and trepidation as the paranoid young Dalí when he first met Gala. Gypsy was the dominant figure in our private movie and I played the petrified virgin with all the competence of utter reality. I was a blank book and Gypsy delighted in inscribing her name through the opening pages.

Our brief, passion-gorged stay in New York was interrupted by the news that we were travelling to Paris, where we became the guests of Ursula Kubler, a marvellous dancer, the widow of the playwright Boris Vian. The performers were lodged in private homes. The Living Theater was run as a commune with minimal finance and, with its anarchist motif, never a cent in official backing. What the company did have was support from artistic fellow-travellers and beds to sleep in all over the world. The plan in those days was to raise sufficient money to buy a big house in Morocco and use it as a base, a place for rehearsals, a home, a hideaway.

With Gypsy I took acid and for two days we danced through the hours to the music of Van Morrison. We ate croissants that smelled so good they must have been baked in heaven and watched old men in berets drinking wine in the street cafés. There were confident

girls wearing mini-skirts as short as they indecently could, and citizens like stooped angry pigeons in grey suits who said nasty things that I answered with a smile. I was protected behind the barricades of language. «That one wants to see the return of the guillotine», Gypsy said. «And he believes in castration...».

«He's a repressed queen», I replied.

Traffic stopped for us. We were outrageous and Paris was suitably outraged. A renaissance was taking place and we were its first hatchlings. The sky was sapphire blue and the sun so pleasant I almost longed for some clouds to come along and add a pessimistic shadow to my unseemly happiness.

Then, the bad news: the players were moving on to Toulouse to perform *Frankenstein* and, as I didn't have a part in the show, I was to remain in Paris and fend for myself until they returned and began rehearsals for *Paradise Now*. I was disappointed... but just a little relieved. Gypsy suffered *ansia* —a hunger, a craving. She was the Creature from the Black Lagoon, a wonderful, sincere friend. But ravenous. We slept that night in the tiny bed entwined like the stems of two flowers and as the first muted rays of the day stole into the attic room she was gone.

I could have felt bitter, stranded, abandoned. But, no, on the contrary, I had never felt more alive. I sat down with Ursula Kubler, the lady of the house, and we drank tea in huge cups that Alice may have used in Wonderland. «Do not worry. Something special will happen to you», Ursula predicted and I was embraced by that feeling of stubborn euphoria that only occurs in the spring.

I walked all over Paris that day, along shady lanes where the domes and façades of baroque churches rise like cloudcaps and cliffs from the miasma of old stones darkened by the patina of everlasting memory. Notre Dame was a giant cake bristling with birthday candles. I stared in the shop windows and pagan marionettes on strings stared back from warty faces; devils and harlequins; puppets and china dolls that stand side by side with Holy Virgins wearing kitsch crowns of green neon. I peeked into the galleries at Place Beauvau. The *gardes républicains* followed my progress as I passed the Élysée Palace and disappeared along the Faubourg St-Honoré, their eyes moving, not their heads, like cartoon soldiers. How envious they must have been, buttoned up in

heavy jackets and me, the Renaissance Man in red velvet bell bottoms.

I bought a used *Hugo's* English-French dictionary from a bookstall and read through the As. I sat on one of the benches down by the river and, as I watched the Seine, I realized how much I adored moving water. It caresses everything it touches like a lover and, like a thoughtful lover, it provides infinite variations on a theme, new and different excitements, lines of barges with men wearing striped Breton jerseys, a sail boat with a yellow sail, two students rowing, their strong arms golden, their faces a study in determination. I thought of Gypsy bumping along in a Volkswagen on her way to Toulouse and suddenly remembered the dream from the previous night and it was so vivid I wanted to rush back to the bookstalls and search for Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*.

I had been lying in a very small bed like a royal crib. It had a high, carved headboard and, over it, curtains had been draped. I opened my eyes and before me appeared the three witches from *Macbeth*, a play I had studied at City College. They were each holding plates, presenting them to me in outstretched arms. The two on the outside then merged into the body of the one in the centre and, during the transformation, she became Gypsy. She stepped forward and showed me the offering. It was a creature, a cross between a giant spider and a giant crab. As I watched, the foul thing turned and began to devour itself, an exercise that culminated in a mass of bloody gore spilling from the plate. Gypsy had a faint but mocking smile on her black lips. She moved slowly backwards and vanished as if into a cloud.

What did it mean?

I strolled back to the house thinking about the dream. I looked up the word in French: *rêve*, and said it like a mantra as I walked along. People stopped to stare at me. I waved and smiled and some waved back. Soon, everyone in Paris would be kissing and hugging, the same as in Haight-Ashbury.

It was that night in the little attic room when I cast the Tarot.

It had been the next day when Ursula's friends, Jean-Pierre Kalfon and Pierre Clementi, had taken me to see Dalí.

The following day, I went by myself.



## *First Date*

My heart began to beat faster as the elevator at the *Hôtel Meurice* climbed to the first floor and I entered room 108: the Royal Suite.

«*Bonjour*».

His eyes lit up as he crossed the room. It was our first date and these were those first enchanting moments, that time when your body tingles and life is a fleeting speck of perfection. «You can touch my stick for luck», he said softly. His expression altered as he led me back to the man to whom he had been speaking.

«It is a crime against nature calling on a genius without a formal invitation», he growled. «What if you had entered while I had my finger inserted in a young virgin? What if I were lying naked on the floor covered in flies and contemplating the crypto-cosmic delights of autoerotism? The President of France could have been buggering San Sebastian. Madame Dalí is outraged...».

The man being scolded was a photographer from Denmark, the tools of his art festooned around his neck like lead weights, a grim shadow like clouds across his blue eyes. He had a red, woebegone face and the look of one making peace with his maker before facing the firing squad. «But I did call», he mumbled.

Dalí stood back and the crowd had to avoid the sails of his windmilling arms. He was furious. «You must reconfirm. I am Dalí. All that I agree to today I will disagree to tomorrow. You should read Jung. You only come here to abuse me».

«No, no...».

«You are a taker, a stealer, a user. You are a fanatic», Dalí roared, using the word Freud had used to describe Dalí when they had met in London thirty years earlier. «What time is it?», he then asked.

The man glanced obligingly at his watch. «Just gone six», he

answered.

«You must wait in the corner until seven. And do not drink my champagne. You may have one olive», Dalí said and offered the photographer the bowl. Everyone was grinning.

Obediently, the blue-eyed man took one olive and retired to the corner.

«What has my Angel been doing? Playing with his limousine? Working on the sewing machine? Ah, this is Ginesta», he said and I exchanged kisses with Verushka, the «last word in beauty», the magazine Vogue had declared. She had long arms like the fronds of a willow tree, long legs in the shortest skirt in Paris, and long yellow hair the colour of the wild broom that grows on the hills around Cadaqués. «This is Violetera, the Prince of Nature».

We spoke, the three of us, and what we said was forgettably brilliant, all nonsense and all so meaningful I knew intuitively it was far better talking foolishly with a genius than talking seriously with a fool. «There is a gap between Ginesta's thighs big enough for a grasshopper to jump through», Dalí said and he pointed with the tip of his Sarah Bernhardt cane. «The fishermen find it most unsettling».

The girl with a preference for standing on her head was today firmly planted on her feet and was gazing at Louis XIV with rapt devotion. By the window, there were two men in business suits trying to look relaxed, and failing. Gala glared at me like a jealous spouse and moved closer to a pretty skinny boy with a fly glued to his cheek. Captain Moore was prowling through the assembly and I noticed the stones studded in the ocelot's collar sparkling like diamonds. The animal sucked miserably at its filed-down teeth and dreamed sad dreams of the jungles it had never seen. I only saw the ocelot smile once, the day it escaped and sent the guests at the *Meurice* scurrying like rats for cover.

Ambassador Mateo seemed sheepish and Dalí's features mutated into histrionic shock as we glided by. I did not know and cared less when I was told that he was the owner of the Peralada vineries, that he was one of the richest men in Spain, that he had helped to finance Franco's uprising in the Spanish Civil War, that El Caudillo had rewarded him with a diplomatic post, that he was setting up a

meeting between Don Salvador and the Conde de Barcelona, Spain's exiled monarch and father of King Juan Carlos.

To me, he was just a chubby bourgeois still disconcerted by his hand kissing error and still having his leg pulled by the Divine. «What am I going to do? What will people say? They will think I'm a pederast...», he had said in confidence and Dalí had announced these noble doubts to the ears of the world, repeating the joke like a musical refrain that, by constant use and with subtle additions, would broaden into a greater theme, from a jingle to an opera, something grand and ubiquitous like the soft yellow light shed by the chandeliers.

We were in the hotel's most famous suite, the one occupied by Alfonso XIII during his exile from Spain. We went from room to room like excited little animals sniffing around their burrow and ended up in the smallest room peering at the lavatory like parents looking down into the cot of their progeny.

«Feel. *C'est colossal*», he said and we both ran our fingertips over the wooden seat. «Polished by the oils from the imperial buttocks and buffed to a state of celestial perfection by Dalí. When I am in Paris, I cannot shit anywhere but here. My farts that give such pleasure are but rehearsals for the Vesuvial eruptions that echo over the walls of this holy shrine...».

He promised that one day he would show me Rodin's *The Thinker* and one day he did. «He is not thinking. He is taking a long and fantastic shit. I will make my own statue and show the world the truth...», and one day he did. It stands outside the *Teatro Museo* beside the *Homage to Newton*, a tall bronze with outstretched arms, one hand holding a pendulum on a chain, shapely legs and a window through the head and body. I remember standing in the pose for long hours that sent searing pains through my shoulders and back and I remember the day we stood the statue on its plinth in Figueres. «This is a Carlos», he whispered and we went to the *Astoria* for tea.

We remained for an age in the little room. Our bodies were pressed together and, Dalí with his left hand, me with my right, we continued to embrace the lavatory seat like a two-headed monster feeling the affects of over-indulgence. It was enormous fun, silly and chimerical. An initiation. We were like two naughty boys

playing together. Dalí liked to play and so did I. We joined on this level. Everyone who passed through the salon was there to be used, and I was there to be used, but in this unique and special way. With my Indian features and long hair, for a long time, people were unsure if I were a boy or a girl, a confusion that slotted into Dalí's game like a piece in a Chinese puzzle. The Tarot had shown me a glimpse of the world and Salvador Dalí was the key, the latch, the door, the bridge to an oniric treasure island. I wasn't being drawn into this world to add to Dalí's fame, his acclaim, his riches. There was a private kingdom, the confidential cosmos of Dalí and Gala; an outer court of hangers-on; then the inner court, the fun court, inhabited by Louis XIV and Amanda Lear, the court I entered the moment we harmoniously made contact with the lavatory seat.

One year, while Dalí was absent, the management at the Meurice was making improvements and replaced the royal seat with a new plastic one. Dalí became hysterical. «They are crucifying me, Violetera. The essence of putrescence is a soft moving benefaction Dalí turns into gold. They are thieves, filthy French thieves...».

He insisted the correct seat be returned and, when they found an old wooden seat, he knew by the patina of scratches and polish that it was not the right one. They continued the search, bringing more and more examples to the suite until Dalí was satisfied that he had found the one he shared with the buttocks of Alfonso. «We are surrounded by moralists, hygienists and philistines. I have no confidence in my class. You can trust the aristocracy to be charming. You can trust the peasants to be vulgar. You can trust the true artist to be a madman. The bourgeois you can trust to steal the toilet from under you...».

He was holding my arm and suddenly squeezed more tightly, not enough to bruise; but almost. «And what does Violetera believe in?», he asked and I responded without having to think about my reply.

«Flowers, fun and fantasy...».

«And dancing?».

«I love to dance. I adore dancing».

«Then you adore the sewing machine», he said and, with his left hand on the muscle in his right upper arm, and his right arm obscenely pumping the air, I added a new word to the Dalí

vocabulary: sewing machine!

«You must come tomorrow at twelve-thirty. Do not be late», he said sternly, freezing me to the spot with the power of his stare, his expression softening as the Captain approached with a sheet of tightly-typed foolscap. They spoke quickly in French, Dalí scrawled an enormous signature over the bottom of the sheet of paper and the Captain hurried off in short military steps with the ocelot. «A brilliant man. A gangster», Dalí said by way of explanation and I would learn that Captain Peter Moore had come into the Divine circle after arranging an audience for Dalí with the Pope, a task that normally would have taken months and was achieved in days by the Captain.

We were quiet for a moment of reflection. «He will betray me», he then said. «He will not be able to help himself. It is something the Greeks understood. It is not his desire. But his nature...».

Dalí took a glass of champagne from a passing tray and gave it to me. Gala was watching, pulling an angry face. «She hates you», he said. «It is the greatest of compliments. Far better to be despised than cherished. I want to love more than to be loved. I am embraced by the arms of the world. Everywhere I go, people clasp their hands together in praise at my very presence. In the next century when children ask: who was Franco? They will answer: he was a dictator in the time of Dalí».

The Danish photographer was still in the corner, head hung low. Now, a lady reporter, striking in that vague Scandinavian way, boldly advanced in the name of her subjugated nation.

«You are insulting my colleague», she said in singsong English. «You make him look a fool».

«It is his gift. I am on a mission from God», Dalí answered, raising his cane and barely missing the chandeliers. «It is my divine role. You are here as acolytes and I am the master. I am the concentric eccentric. You can kiss my ring». He held out his hand.

«It is immoral», the reporter began.

«Morals are an anachronism. It is the rope that ties the simple mind and lashes it to the slithering melting moving slime matter that passes by osmosis from the past to the future. The thermometer of dissolute consciousness is the ice cube in the boiling oceans of outer hyper-reality. You come to me from a sausage eating nation

where a spiteful climate freezes the brain cells. You shall pose for my greatest painting. The Eskimos have eighty ways of saying the word ice. I shall paint your imagination in eighty shades of white. You should call my *homme d'affaires*.

The reporter opened her mouth to speak but Dalí beat her to it. «You must take part in an important experiment. Take the finger you use for pointing at Dalí and insert it into the mouth of this flower...».

There was a bowl of tuberose on the table next to where we were standing. The woman did as she was told, pushing her finger between the bulbous labia at the heart of one of the blooms and withdrawing it again with the speed of a lesbian caught in *flagrante delicto* with her lover.

Dalí's eyes were popping from his head. «You have found the clitoris», he screamed. «She - has - a beau - ti - ful - orgasm. Smell your fingers. *C'est colossal*. The perfume of sex».

The woman was rubbing her fingers together, the way one does... They were sticky and it was clear by her expression what was in her mind.

«The sister of Lazarus made an ointment from the tuberose. Read the Apostles. Botticelli filled his paintings with the flower and mixed the juices with his paint. They leave a mark like dried semen. Look», he said, pointing at his stained waistcoat, advancing on the woman as she retreated through the press of people to hide behind the photographer still holding an olive pip in the palm of his hand.

Dalí turned away.

«*Bonjour*», he said and I kissed a gamine girl dressed like an elf in forest green. «Bigoudi», he added as an introduction and, having yet to reach the Bs in my *Hugo's* dictionary, I didn't know it meant hair-curler. Dalí brushed the sides of the girl's cheeks with his cheeks and they blew kisses into the air with the affected exaggeration of New York socialites. He liked the form not the touch. But there were exceptions.

He pushed his sharp finger into my navel as if pushing a button in an elevator. «The Greeks built their Temple to Apollo at Delphi and the stone omphalos at its centre marks the centre of the classical world before Greece moved to the outhouse of European memory and the train station at Perpignan became the earth's belly

button». He stroked my hair. «You have so much hair», he said and I read his mind for the first time: Dalí was vain. He was thinking about his own thinning hair falling as fine as silk threads over his collar.

He pulled another tuberose from the vase. He gave it to Bigoudi and she snarled as she put it between her teeth. «She's very Dalínian», he said, then his expression changed. His eyes doubled in size and he spoke sharply: «Don't forget, twelve-thirty», he added, hurrying off like a nervous insect, his reflection chasing over the gilt mirrors piercing the pale green walls with their microcosms of Dalí mania and magic.

We were standing by the tall windows. Bigoudi slipped her hand in mine and we looked out over Les Tuileries, a sea of green like her costume. The chestnut trees were as big as dreams, their lanterns of blossom like diamond frost in the lowering sun.

We left the salon in front of the crowd and went to Montmartre where the artists were packing away their easels and filling the street cafés. I bought a chiffon scarf and Bigoudi bought a green hat. We drank white wine and ate bowls of onion soup. The waiters wore tight jackets and heroic moustaches. They looked like opera stars or torturers, some whip thin like matadors, some with soft thighs and hips that barged through the tables in miniature landslides, a circular tray floating above like a discus. Music murmured from the cave of a smoky recess, a guitar and flute, something as private as two people making love and that, Bigoudi said, breaking the silence, is the essence of jazz, the song of France. Two children sat at the next table with their nanny and a plate of chocolate doughnuts. An artist with a sharp face and sharp scissors cut my silhouette from a sheet of black paper and stuck it on a sheet of white.

«Un cadeau».

«Pourquoi?».

«Pourquoi no?».

«That's Paris», my friend said and we ordered *soufflé glacé aux framboises*. The sky was ribboned in orange streaks, the same as my scarf. The smell in the air was delicious. I thought of Gypsy miles away in Toulouse and it felt so very long ago when she had left. San Francisco was fading from my memory. America was an alien

planet floating in the void of wild uncharted waters.

Europe was different. Europeans seemed to have been born with a feeling for art and literature, poetry and beauty. Old men in bars read Camus and remember Picasso marching through the musky afternoon streets with his portfolio under his arm. I felt like a newborn child, a naked infant ready to suckle at the breast of eternal culture.

My earliest desire as a young adult had been to work as a teacher, to be a pillar of society. But LSD had allowed me to decode my DNA and, through its foggy mysterious influence, I had reprogrammed myself. I became Carlos Lozano. The European blood my forefathers had brought from Granada had emerged, hissing and bubbling to the surface. I had felt it before. But in mere whispers. I felt it that night in Montmartre like a heavenly choir of internal voices. I had arrived home. Five days in Paris and the pagan darkness of the New World was melting from my genes.

We finished the wine. We smoked pot and climbed back into the car. It was a white Morgan with an open top and Bigoudi drove at high speed down the hill to Place de la Concorde, the chiffon scarf sailing behind us in the breeze. It was Isadora Duncan relived. We watched the fountains, liquid silver, as ethereal as yesterday. The Eiffel Tower was lit from below and had the appearance of a golden space rocket. The night was gloriously warm. Bigoudi was incorporeal, mythical, passionate and fragile. We had become friends on sight, without words or physical contact. Women liked me. They wanted to protect me, change me, embroider fresh threads to the fabric of my being. We held hands. «He was right, you have beautiful hair», she said with the appreciation of an expert. Bigoudi was Brigitte Bardot's hairdresser Dalí told me the following day.



## *Hair*

Dalí never wore a watch but he always knew what time it was. I arrived at twelve-thirty and he opened the door the moment I knocked. He was as excited as a small boy and stroked my bare arms as if I were a marble statue just released from its icy cell. I was wearing my Red Indian waistcoat and the chiffon scarf intoxicated by the Paris night. He pulled these off without explanation.

«Do you want to be a success, Violetera?».

«Of course».

«Success is a serious business. Few are ready for it. Or understand it. You must do everything I say. All great fortunes begin with a great theft, and all success begins in scandal...».

I stood by the window and he studied me as if for a painting. He took a bouquet of tuberose from a vase, shook the water on to the floor, and began plaiting the stems into a coronet. His fingers were quick and skilful, wonderful to watch. He held his work up to study it several times, adding more flowers until he was satisfied. He placed the finished object on my head. «Frederick the Great said a crown is just a hat that lets in the rain...». He readjusted the coronet, tucking in the leaves and straightening the blooms. He led me to the mirror and it was a Botticelli nymph that occupied the glass.

«A Hindu once told me you find God by digging in the same hole. He was mad. The substance of success is scandal and patience. Are you patient, Carlitos?». I nodded and was showered in water.

He took my hand, led me across the room and opened the door that led to a passage dividing the salon from the bedroom. «Wait here, behind this door. Don't make a sound. Patience is quintessential».

He closed the door and disappeared.

I waited.

I waited.

And I waited.

I was the luckiest man in Paris, Ursula Kubler had told me over morning coffee. «All the best people want to meet Dalí. The society ladies and artists. Simply everyone», she had said.

I waited.

«Only do what you want to do because he'll want you to do things you don't want to do», Bigoudi had cautioned.

I waited.

I began to feel a bit silly. Where was Gala? Where was Dalí? Was it just a game? More than thirty minutes had gone by. Water was dripping on my shoulders and running in streams over my chest.

I waited.

Why did I stand there like a fool, waiting? I had an intuition, I suppose, that it would all work out in the end and, anyway, I didn't have anything else to do.

I waited. And waited. And waited. And, finally, a whole lifetime later, the door was flung open.

Dalí was standing there like a circus showman, his arms raised, not looking at me, but looking at another man in a cream linen suit with dark hair and an astonished expression. Dalí blew a fanfare on an imaginary trumpet... «All the way from Colombia in South America, star of the Living Theater, the amazing, the marvellous, the beau - ti - ful, the one and only... Carlos Lozano...».

«Yes, yes, you're right», the other man said.

«Per - fect».

When Cleopatra was presented to the court in Rome she was rolled in a carpet and unrolled at Caesar's feet. That was how I felt as Dalí pulled me into the room and turned me around. «So thin», he said.

«Yes, thin», the other man repeated. He was rather good looking with dark brown eyes and thick sensuous lips.

«Hermes and Aphrodite».

«Exactly».

«Per - fect».

«Perfect».

Such compliments! I adored it. I felt like a cat being stroked. We

all hopped around the room like devotees in a heathen temple and, finally, exhausted, settled down and became more formal. The man in the cream suit was Bertrand Castelli, the Corsican who had directed the musical *Hair* in Acapulco and Los Angeles, and was opening with a new cast in Paris six weeks later.

I had heard about *Hair* on the out-of-work actors grapevine and had dismissed it as something beyond my reach. But Dalí had decided I was made for the show and Castelli appeared to share his enthusiasm even before I went for a full audition the following day—the most terrifying experience of my life.

Even more terrifying than my liaison with Gypsy...

I arrived with Dalí at noon. The entire company was on stage and, as we walked in, Castelli called for a halt. The silence was eerie. All those eyes looking at me.

«Now», said the director. «Dance for us. You lead and they'll follow».

I was panic-stricken; horrified. There was a hollow feeling in my stomach and in the hollow butterflies were fluttering their wings. I thought I was going to be sick. I took a very deep breath and a line from a Bob Dylan song swam into my mind: There's no success like failure and failure's no success at all...

What did it mean?

I took another breath and strode with false courage up to the stage. There's no success like failure... I knew how the French aristocrats felt when they climbed the steps to the guillotine. The musicians began to play. I closed my eyes and, as the blade of steel began to fall, I let the music seep into my soul. Then I began to move, slowly at first, from left to right and back again, measuring the boards with my steps, finding purpose, self-possession, building the tempo into something wild and promiscuous. The other dancers had joined in, following my movements. I began to feel as light as air. The butterflies in my tummy had given me wings. I felt like a choreographer. I felt like a star.

The writer Meryle Secrest described me in *Salvador Dalí, A Biography*, as stagestruck and it had seemed an insult when I read those words but she was right. Up there, in make-up, in the glare of the lights, before an audience, you become, not a character, you become yourself, your real, true, inner self. I adored acting. I loved

to dance. I wanted to spend my whole life dancing. The music had taken me deep into the mysterious heart of my own being and I moved in the spiralling patterns of savage nature. My fears had gone. All doubt is vanity. I was filled with joy and confidence. I knew I would be accepted before the music stopped and, when it stopped, Castelli and the troupe applauded.

Dalí was in ecstasy. Like a father. Like a lover. He kissed me on the cheek and this was something he never did. «You will be everything you want to be. I shall be your teacher...». I was in heaven.

I didn't know it at the time, but Dalí had made the arrangements for me to get a part in *Hair* in order to keep me in Paris. With a regular job, I would be able to acquire all the necessary papers and permits, social security, a wage, things I had not even thought about. «It's a miracle», Ursula Kubler said. She was so happy for me. «What you have achieved in one week would have taken anyone else two years. You arrive in Paris without speaking French, meet Dalí and land a part in a new musical».

It was a miracle. Dalí had the Midas touch and everyone wanted to be touched by him. Just being seen with Dalí was enough to help you in your career. Bertrand Castelli understood that.

«You were right», he said and Dalí glared back at him with an irritated expression.

«Dalí is always right».

The director turned to me. «You start tomorrow at nine», he said. «It's going to be a lot of work. We're opening next month».

Steaming, amused, delighted, the dancers had gathered around and were staring at Dalí with open mouths. «All success comes from hard work. Hard work and patience and more hard work», he roared, menacing the company with his walking stick. «Never trust in inspiration. You must work every day, every day, every day. Inspiration arrives through your work. It arrives through your involvement. I am a worker. A peasant. I work seventeen hours a day».

The dancers moved closer. They looked like chicks in a nest waiting for sustenance but it was Dalí who was feeding. He was a vampire. He breast fed on youth. Everyone who went to the Princes' and Paupers' Tea at the *Meurice* was young and pretty and if they

were old and crumbling they were there solely for business. He hated the old. «It is a pestilence, a plague, a monstrosity. It is the Almighty's sense of humour saving the worst for last...». Dalí was dedicating his life to the battle against unrelenting time and decay. He did not drink or smoke. He was a glutton for vitamin pills. He swam every day in the summer and, when he began to feel unsafe swimming in the sea at Port Lligat, he had a penis-shaped pool built in the garden, an old man's pool, long without being deep. When he was amused his eyes popped. He never smiled, not in the normal way. «It causes wrinkles...».

We left *Theatre Porte Saint Martin* and the chauffeur drove us to *Lasserre's* to celebrate. A short man with a large head was leaving with a tall woman as we entered. «Do you know who that man is?», Dalí asked me.

«I've no idea», I replied.

«Onassis. An excellent swimmer».

We were ushered into an elevator and a young boy in an oversized uniform escorted us to the dining room on the first floor. It was a beautiful room full of beautiful people who stopped eating to admire our entrance. «Is it Hermes or Aphrodite? Is Dalí a pederast or a dirty old man? Let their tongues wag, Violetera», he said in a stage whisper as the head waiter led us to Dalí's table. He made a big fuss helping the painter into his seat and shouted angry instructions at his fawning minions.

The table was on a raised platform facing the elevator at the centre of the dining room and the other tables seemed to have been arranged in a circle around us. The walls were golden and slender columns supported an enchanted roof that was open to the sky. Minuscule white clouds like the fleece of spring lambs floated just above our heads, close enough to touch. Most of the diners had returned to their food and the silver cutlery danced over the plates like a mountain stream singing its way down to the valley. Others sat back nursing their wine glasses and just gazed at Dalí like people waiting for a show to begin at the theatre. It was a continuous show. You were with an unconventional, singular personality. A star. Anything could happen. And it always did. I never tired of being with Dalí. Even when he was nasty I still adored him. He was like a lobster: masses of shell, tough on the

outside, hard on the inside, and just a morsel of soft sweet meat.

A woman was observing us from the next table. She had immense breasts pushed up and out of her green dress like pieces of some juicy African fruit, like something being sold in the market. «Aphrodite had a very small bust», he told me in a voice loud enough for the chauffeur outside to hear. «She came out of the sea shivering, her teeth chattering, and intuitively she put her arms up to hide her breasts. Women always hide their breasts first and leave the black triangle of curly hair on display like a battle flag. Women with small breasts are goddesses who bring pleasure to sex. I am a tit man. I revere, esteem and worship small breasts».

The waiter came and Dalí sent him away. He was giving a lecture. «Aphrodite is the goddess of love, beauty and sexual rapture. She is Isis, Hathor, Ishtar and Venus. Hesiod tells us the legend has its roots in the castration of Ouranos. It was Kronos who threw the severed genitalia into the sea and the sea erupted in a wave of foam. From the foam rose the goddess Aphrodite. As she came out of the sea her teeth were chattering and that is the root of the castanets», he said, leaning across the table and waving his finger at me. «Big breasts are the base element of the bovine principle. Women with small breasts are for pleasure. Women with big breasts are cows and cows are bred to eat and procreate».

The woman with big breasts had turned bright red. Even her breasts blushed. The man with her looked away. So did I. It was wonderfully embarrassing.

The head waiter reappeared, bowing as if before monarchy. Dalí accepted two menus and glared at me as I read through the list. «Yes, yes, yes?», he said. He could be so impatient.

«Caviar», I decided.

«Fried eggs», he said and I knew that had I ordered fried eggs, he would have asked for caviar. He was the master of contradiction.

I took such a long time trying to read the main courses that Dalí ordered for me. It sounded repulsive: a boneless pigeon stuffed with liver and served with white mushrooms. «He has it every day», he said, pointing with his cane to a handsome older man at a table by the window. «André Malraux», Dalí added and I was none the wiser. There was so much to learn.

«According to the elucidations of Euclid, the greatest

mathematician ever born, the egg is the most perfect form in creation. Leda, in the body of a swan, worked on the sewing machine with Zeus and from her egg emerged Dalí and Gala, the Divine Twins. The egg is sacred, eternal, perfect». His brow fluted and his face twisted with a look of epic disgust. He began to shudder. «The embryo grows from bodily waste and putrescence. You are not going to have embryos, Carlitos», he said with such demented ire a feeling of sheer terror passed through me.

«Never», I promised.

The waiter had filled our water glasses and Dalí drank like a man thirsting in the desert, the water dripping over his chin and tie. He brushed it away. «I am wearing my lucky tie for you, Violetera», he announced. «And this is my lucky walking stick, Victor Hugo's third leg». He brandished a black ebony cane and then turned to an obsequious wine waiter who was standing there with a cork that he offered to Dalí with all the ceremony of one presenting a small object of infinite desire.

Dalí sniffed it, placed it on the table, retrieved it, and sniffed it again. Then he nodded. The waiter poured a small measure of red wine into a glass. Dalí looked at it for at least two minutes. The whole of *Lasserre's* had grown silent. The clouds above the open roof had stopped moving. Finally, he lifted the glass and stuck his long nose inside, his moustache quivering like flies' wings. He sat back and, after repeating the test, he took the smallest sip. He settled the glass back on the table, turned his head sideways and very slowly motioned for the two glasses to be filled. The wine was a 1959 *Chiroubles* and Dalí never drank another drop.

My caviar came and, while he ate his fried eggs and broke bread all over the linen tablecloth, I talked and he made some pretence at listening. I told him about the messages concealed in the Tarot and he was far from impressed. Then, I told him I had made a copy of his birth chart and we had an astrological affinity. His face remained passive. He looked like a sad worker eating alone in a café. «We are both feminine signs», I said enthusiastically. «You're Taurus. I'm Scorpio; earth and water...».

Dalí refilled my glass. He did not drink but he liked to see others getting drunk. «And?», he said.

«You're possessive. I'm passionate».

«And?».

«That's it...».

«That's it?».

He threatened me with his cane. «Taurus was the white bull that wanted to work on the sewing machine with Europa and carried her away on his back. It was really Zeus in disguise and when the god returned to his normal form the sparks created the stars that make the brightest constellation in the firmament. People are no different from wine. We are born at a given moment, in a given place. There are good years and bad, from good valleys and inauspicious ones. Some bottles are shaken and the sediment fouls the taste. Some are dropped and smash into a thousand million pieces. That is astrology. Never, never speak of it again».

I shook my head.

«You are here to give and receive pleasure. You must only tell me things that are interesting. I am in a state of permanent intellectual erection. I crave cerebral copulation. I love people with great brains even more than I love people with great bank accounts. Make your stories mesmerizing. Work on them. Cultivate a story as you would cultivate a plant, nurse it, nurture it. To be a success in society you must be a raconteur. God despises astrology and prefers a well told lie to a tedious truth. Learn to lie and I will learn to listen. Mendacity is an art. It is a great art», he bellowed, zooming off like an astronaut on a cosmic tangent. «Art is the future. The purpose of art is to make people see the familiar through new eyes: to change, modify, to awaken. Art is political. Once it is understood, it loses its power and becomes aesthetic, decorative, pedagogic. Artists must travel over the stepping stones left by the Impressionists, Cubists, Dada, Surrealism and Dalí, the revolutionary movements that take inspiration from communism, anarchy, Buddhism and nihilism —four steps to the void».

There was egg yolk on his chin, crumbs on his moustache. Everyone at *Lasserre's* was looking and he turned to stare at the woman with large breasts. «What is the difference between capitalism and communism?», he demanded and then he answered: «Capitalism is the exploitation of man by man. Communism is the reverse. It is a Russian joke. Galushka, my wife, is a Russian noblewoman, a relative of the Tsar».



He drank more water. He was enjoying himself.

The main course came. Dalí had lobster and I picked gingerly at my stuffed pigeon. It was primeval and delicious. I glanced across the room at André Malraux and resolved to find out who he was. I was already aware that it would have been useless to ask Dalí. He revealed what amused him and, if you did ask a direct question, he would deliberately confuse —cretinize, as he would say, by his reply. He was always contrary. If you said something was black, he would say it was white. If you told him you had done something in particular, he would have done it earlier, bigger and better. He was as fascinating as he could be a tiresome bore.

While he attacked the lobster, I told him my *Macbeth* dream and, now, he was truly enchanted.

He gulped his water. «It is the castration dream. The female is intimidating and the gypsy woman appears to you as a witch. The spider represents sexual fears. In devouring itself, the creature vanishes and Hermes becomes Aphrodite. The bloody gore is thrown into the sea and you emerge with long hair covering your breasts and the mystery of your limousine a gift for the world to admire and enjoy. You must give and receive pleasure, Violetera».

In the summer, Dalí would sit in the garden folding tinfoil or pressing balls of wax into miniature sculptures that would be cast in gold and sold in limited editions for a fortune. Like me, in *Lasserre's* I was a sheet of tinfoil ready to be turned and twisted. Soft wax in the hands of the perverter.

«You are not having coffee», he ordered.

He came nimbly to his feet. He took a step towards the woman with generous breasts and she shrunk backwards into her chair. Dalí took her hand and almost kissed it. He glanced appreciatively at her dress. «I adore green», he told her and, of course, it was the one colour he detested.

We took the elevator down one floor to the bathroom and, like a naughty boy again, he tried all the scents and sprayed eau de Cologne under the arms of his velvet jacket. He studied himself in the mirror.

«¿Cómo estoy?».

«Eres guapo».

«¿Guapo?».

«Sí, muy guapo».

He loved me to tell him how handsome he was. He combed his thinning hair, turned the ends of his outrageous moustache and then went off to pee, talking all the time.

«The bathroom is a ten», he informed me. «A Canadian woman I met at the *St Regis* makes a hobby rating bathrooms. She gives both the *Plaza* in New York and *Claridge's* in London an eight. A ten must have a variety of perfumes, linen towels, individual soap, hand cream, full-length mirrors and a female in attendance».

There was. Dalí came out of the cubicle with a crestfallen look and began tapping his pockets like a man who has lost his keys and is feeling agitated as a result. I gave the woman two francs. He never carried money. The bill from the restaurant would be sent to the *Hôtel Meurice* and the concierge would pass it on to Captain Moore.

«Let's cruise?», he said.

## *Breasts*

Can you imagine the smell inside a French police station? All those *Gauloises*. That sweat!

I had been wandering through the Latin Quarter with Laura Jamieson. The night was warm. I removed my waistcoat. Laura was wearing a velvet skirt slashed to a wisp on one side and a gossamer fine top as diaphanous as crystal. I slipped my shoes off to feel in touch with the earth's heart beat, but it was Laura's all-but-bare breasts that caused the hysteria. A black wagon screeched to a halt and four *gendarmes* emerged with clenched fists and blood curdling cries. Laura began to freak out. I was stunned to silence. A crowd of people with grinning faces gathered and an old man walking his dog started to sing the *Marseillaise*. Laura's breasts were divine: high, pert, uncompromising. One of the *gendarmes* twisted my arm up my back and I was bundled into the wagon. Laura followed. Two cops joined us. They lit cigarettes. «*Pourquoi?*», Laura kept saying and they just stared at her and made no reply.

The wagon bumped over the pot-holed streets and lurched to a dramatic halt in a courtyard lit by gas lamps. The doors were flung open and there stood a big-bellied sergeant among a circle of men with features all sharing in some vile mysterious way an expression at once indifferent and terrible: police faces, the same the world over. One of them was slapping his palm with a white baton.

Laura grabbed my arm but we were separated, marched into the building and down a corridor that extended as endlessly as a de Chirico landscape. The smell of urine permeated the air. The butterflies that occupied my tummy before I went on stage had grown into armoured beetles. Laura was still freaking out and the *gendarmes* were having a marvellous time.

We came to a soiled grey room where a naked light bulb was

suspended on a long cord. There was a new smell: fear and sweat mixed up with the smoke from countless cigarettes that climbed the walls and swirled over the high ceiling.

I remained quiet but I was very frightened. Apart from the general pandemonium, the shouting, crying, the sudden gestures and movements, I had to contend with my ripe, South American imagination: I pictured my finger nails being pulled out, the soles of my feet being caned, my hair being cut off! There is nothing worse than being arrested except being arrested in a country where you do not speak the language.

We sat. They remained standing. There was a method. «But what have we done?», Laura asked in schoolgirl French as sweet as her schoolgirl breasts.

«You are indecent».

«Indecent?».

«You are dressed indecently. You are in France. In France you must behave correctly», the fat sergeant said and he pointed at her breasts. His eyes were touched with the crimson flame of a hardened drinker. He asked for our passports.

He studied Laura's: it was British, so official at first glance between blue-black covers, the golden lion and unicorn clutching a crowned shield. Inside, it described her as a designer. She had made clothes for Jean Shrimpton, Twiggy, Keith Richards, Jimmy Page. She owned a shop at the World's End in Chelsea. Throwing your bra in the dustbin was really quite normal in London, she explained. «*C'est la mode*».

The sergeant and his men nodded judiciously. They were Frenchmen, after all.

They looked at my Colombian passport with the American Green Card I would foolishly allow to expire and the papers that gave me permission to work in France.

«He's an actor. He's in *Hair*», Laura said.

The mood softened. They had read about *Hair* in the press. It had been highly acclaimed. Was I really in the show? The circle of eyes concentrating on Laura's pink nipples as if they were a pair of dangerous criminals shifted focus. I smiled. «Yes, yes, I'm a dancer...». I was wearing my stage clothes: velvet flares, the Apache waistcoat jiggling with beads, a string of necklaces. Bertrand

Castelli had taken my everyday way of dressing and had used it as a guide for the wardrobe department.

The *gendarmes* now spoke slowly so we could understand them. «I would like to see *Hair* myself», said the fat sergeant. «But it is impossible to get a ticket».

«*C'est impossible*», the others chorused.

«I want to take my wife», said the baton slapper.

«I want to take my mistress», the sergeant added. They laughed.

«If only we could get seats», said another, offering his cigarettes and, like the petrified faces on the ceiling, Laura's breasts were forgotten, sheathed in a counterpane of common avarice, a link that finally joined us.

We were given our freedom and gulped insatiably at the fresh air filling the moon-washed streets. We walked along the side of the Seine on ancient stones that remembered the footsteps of Victor Hugo, Marie-Antoinette, Proust... «a gossip», Dalí had said. I adored the rolling wave of arches that carries the Pont-Neuf across to the Île de la Cité, the shard of rock where the first Parisians built their homes and their progeny raised up Notre Dame. The island is shaped like a river barge and, on board, you feel embraced by the mythology of France, something planted so deep the roots are as solid as the belltower where Quasimodo rang out his love for Esmeralda.

There is nothing as heavenly as the Paris skyline at night, a cloak for its many dark secrets. Beyond the sweeping scrolls of the baroque architecture stands that infested *gendarmerie* in a slum quarter of crumbling tenements. All contradictions find an accomplice. The divine shares his sheets with the fiendish. Paris produces the most chic, beautiful women in the world and, to compensate, it has an astonishing number of ugly ones. The city is genuinely *avant-garde*, but its disciples are a mere handful of corks bobbing in a surprisingly dull, conventional sea.

Looking down on the Seine with the starlight gleaming over the East Bank, the river turns into a band of silver. We were cheerful again. Like two people who had survived a mugging and lost only their dignity. A taxi dropped us in Bastille and we danced at the *Perroquet Rouge*. When the music paused, a bottle of anís appeared on a tray with a platoon of small glasses. We sat at a table with a

man with shiny black hair and arms tattooed with stories of past loves and faraway voyages.

«Do you know who I am?». He opened his eyes wider to tell me. «I am the one who upset the apple cart. I am the King of the Gypsies. I have eaten human flesh. I have been everywhere. I have done everything». He leaned back to pour a drink down his throat and then drew closer with strange but wise counsel: «Beware of envy. Beware of judgements», he said. He stuck out his tongue and on it was tattooed a scorpion.

A tall African girl in a red Maasai cloak joined us. She read my palm and warned me in her deep voice of the potent influence of an older man. «Do not lose your own soul», she said, caressing my hand with her slender black fingers. She then took out a wooden box and removed a cigarette wrapped in violet-coloured paper. She lit it, took the smoke deep into her lungs and passed it to Laura, who did the same. Laura gave it to me. I inhaled the smoke. It was as if a long cord had been wrapped around my neck and then ripped away so that my brain spun like a spinning top. Humming. Numbing. «Buddha sticks mixed with Manali», the Maasai told me. She explained that the hashish used by devotees at the Shiva temples in India is taken from plants that grow in a certain valley in Manali, high in the Himalayas. They remove the resin before the sun lifts above the mountains and the crop is blessed by a priest... It was so romantic, I wanted to leave immediately and journey to the East. I took another draw on the violet joint and passed it to the King of the Gypsies.

He held it aloft like a trophy. «So soft, pure and soft, patterned with lights of gold», he said breezily, eyes closed. Then he opened his eyes and glared at me: «That's how you can tell», he added with sudden ire, slapping his palm on the table so that it rocked and spilled the drinks.

He stood, took Laura's hand in an old fashioned way, and escorted her to the centre of the dance floor. He danced in the most extraordinary manner, his feet immobile, while his body swayed violently like a yacht sail in a storm. A ball of mirrors turned on the ceiling above, its many facets capturing miniature universes instantly released with greed for the next. Laura looked like an angel. No wonder she had upset the *gendarmes*. Whatever desires

they had would never be consummated and their frustrations would be all the worse when they saw the skinny unclad boys and girls in *Hair*. Members of the cast were allowed two complimentary tickets a week and, for the next month, my allocation would be taken up by the forces of the law.

My eyes left the dancers to idle in the haze. I had the feeling that I was sitting in the underground sewers inhabited by the Phantom of the Opera: the arched ceiling, wide arched doorways leading to narrow passages and spiralling stairways. Perhaps it was a crack in the tiles on the path to paradise? It was an oasis. A safe harbour.

There exists in Paris a family of outsiders who operate on the edges of society: pickpockets and transvestites, runaways and extraterrestrials, aristocrats and actors, vagrants and surrealists; a family with its own code and its own way of identifying unfamiliar brothers and sisters. There is a way of life they share, a vision the careful saver and conscientious clerk can never perceive or even imagine. In a reckless moment, visitors from the bourgeois world may venture into the *Perroquet Rouge*, but they would see only distant shadows like childhood memories. They walk home, bored and fatigued, uncertain what all the fuss is about. For some, the late night streets are always deserted. For others, the doors to magical kingdoms open and entrance costs merely your empathy.

Most of the bar's habitués were men. A number of the women were clearly men also and there were those who had yet to decide. Close to me, sitting on a high stool like an item in a store, was a young girl, lithe as a gymnast, as pretty as sin, a schoolgirl with long restless legs she kept crossing and uncrossing like a pair of knitting needles. She was wearing a white party dress of the type a small, spoilt child would wear. It had puffed sleeves and a large bow at the back. Her golden hair was held in a chignon with negligent strands hanging down so coyly one suspected the hand of Dalí. Her pink tongue roamed over scarlet lips and her eyes sparkled as they met mine. She was a *chef-d'oeuvre*: the daughter who provokes thoughts of incest, a virgin and potential whore: Madonna and Mary Magdalene in one impeccable host. She was laughing with everyone who passed, swaggering, swashbuckling men wearing Stalin moustaches and hooped ear-rings that broadcast

in their shine a prayer for eternal youth. The lights whirled and flashed, reflecting from the globe of glass.

«Isn't she delicious?», the Maasai said. She looked like a warrior with high cheek bones, a delicate nose and eyes black as mica.

I nodded. We drank glasses of anís in one swallow. The room seemed to be rocking just slightly from side to side like the deck of a ship.

«She belongs to the Gypsy».

Dalí was delighted. «Your stories are improving, Violetera», he said, eyes gleaming. «I want to know every —thing there is to know about the *Perroquet Rouge*. But first, tell me, did any of the *gendarmes* try and rape you? Did they insert things in your enchanted garden? Did they flog you? Policemen are always bullies and bullies are bullies to hide their craving desire to be sodomized. Being taken by the police is an expanding, broadening, widening experience. You are unfortunate not to have been put in prison».

«In prison?», I gasped for oxygen.

«It was the best time of my life», he said wistfully. «I was a renowned criminal in the vanguard of Catalan anarchy and separatism. The most brilliant people in the world come from Catalonia and in Dalí they saw a leader, a figurehead. They put me in solitary confinement in Figueres and three months passed like a few seconds it was such joy».

We were in the *Closerie des Lilas*, just the two of us. My being arrested had raised me to the flavour of the moment, a position that switched permanently around the court and out on occasions into the heart of the Divine's itinerant desires. The café was full. Hemingway used to hog the table by the old stove in the winter and sit there all day writing his stories. Dalí ordered tinned sardines.

«That's all I had, every day, one tin of sardines. It was glorious. If I never ate anything except sardines from a tin for the rest of my life I would be content. I abhor people who are fussy about their food».

I smiled and we ate our sardines Catalan style, dropping them into the mouth with bread soaked in olive oil and washing it down with bubbly water. We talked briefly about *Hair*, so routine with six evening shows and one *matinée* each week, the details bored him. They would soon bore me, too.



Dalí had come to the opening with Gala. The *Theatre Porte Saint Martin* had been full to the rafters but I only felt like a star when the performance was over and he appeared at the stage door with two dozen tuberose. «You are a robber. A scoundrel. You have stolen the winged sandals of Hermes. You jump higher and move faster and you are more beau - ti - ful than anyone on stage».

It was completely untrue and absolutely adorable. After more than a month rehearsing a new show, the air of hope and apprehension that grips the cast generates enough tension to hold a tightrope walker. When you finally open —and if it is a success; even a mild success— the relief is like having a baby. «*C'est colossal*. Beau - ti - ful. *C'est extraordinaire*. The people in the audience had eyes only for you».

He could be so generous it was embarrassing. Julian Clerc, the lead in *Hair*, was surrounded by his own little court but Dalí's arrival had eclipsed the interest of the crowd. I was in ecstasy. «Hermes is the God of riches and good fortune. He is the messenger, a dancer, a trickster and the Patron Saint of Thieves, something Jesus the Fish acknowledged on the Cross. He was the son of Zeus, you know».

We stepped into the back of a black Cadillac and the crowd parted like a breaking tide as we pulled away. The windows were down. «Farewell little fishes», he cried and the people grinned and waved. «Jesus was a fish», he said and, his expression changing, added: «You should live and die like a flower. I can't wait to see Amanda's face when I tell her how magnificent you were. She'll be insane with jealousy».

I made my entrance at *Maxim's* and everyone stood and clapped. Even Gala, who had gone straight from the theatre to the restaurant. Amanda came gracefully to her feet and leaned forward to blow me a kiss. She was dressed to kill in a plunge-neck black dress, her hair like a field of swaying corn around her pallid shoulders. Throughout the meal, she kept checking her lips in the silver butter knife and I could hear the sound of her stilettos sharpening under the table. Louis XIV, as poised as a royal princess, had lots of sweet things to say. Prince Dado Ruspoli grinned; he was in love with life and high on opium. There was a pretty boy with hair in ringlets who sat next to Gala and some other people with

unmemorable names and expressions of wonderment.

«What's your sign?», Dado asked me and Dalí banged the table top with his Sarah Bernhardt cane.

«What is the sign of Jesus?», he roared.

Dado shrugged like a good Italian. «Capricorn», he said.

«The early Christians changed the birthdate of Jesus to comply with the mid-winter celebrations they discovered among the savages of northern Europe. The Christian era and the Age of Pisces are contemporaneous. The very name, Jesus, transliterates as the word fish in Aramaic, his own tongue. As man or myth, he chose fishermen as disciples. Not goats».

Dalí waved away the laughter and I sat there amazed by his theme; amazed that it had begun before our arrival at *Maxim's*. «He was a fisher of men», he continued. «He performed miracles on the sea and with the fishes. The Gnostics sketched a fish in the dust, not a cross, to identify themselves. Jesus possessed all the qualities of Pisces, the last sign of the Zodiac and its completion of all human potentials. He was humble, emotional, unworldly and vague, unlike those who arrive in December under the sign of Capricorn, with their money worries and dreams of ruling the world. Jesus was born in the spring, a Pisces for the Age of Pisces. Violetera is a Scorpion, the same as Amanda. They will both sting me in the balls...».

He paused, then rapped the table once more with his cane. «Now, let us talk of more interesting things. I will tell you everything I have done since I woke this morning and found a dead fly on my pillow».

Dinner at *Maxim's* passed into history. Hair had opened on the night of the May full moon and that day at the *Closerie des Lilas* the moon was already gaining weight in its second quarter. Time is fleeing and we spend our lives chasing it up a hill that grows steeper.

Dalí had a pathological greed for life. He adored eating, sleeping, fame, farting, debauching; he adored himself and his pleasures. He demanded an interminable round of new diversions, and, as with all giant egos, a changing audience to impress and entertain. Nothing succeeds like success and nothing recedes like its passing. It requires endless fresh coats of paint just as women of an uncertain age need perpetual reassuring peeks between the jaws of their compact. I was now an advancing pawn in the Dalí chess

game. I was obliged to find new ways of amusing him and my alleged indecency at the side of Laura Jamieson was perfect.

«Who is this Laura Jamieson?».

«A designer», I replied. «She's English».

«Do not condemn so readily».

«I'm not...».

«I once knew an Englishman I almost liked».

He ordered fruit salad to be healthy and swamped it in cream. «Do you want to be a success, Carlitos?», he asked as if for the first time.

«Of course».

Cream dripped from his spoon down the front of his gold lamé waistcoat. He wiped it away with his fingers and then turned the ends of his moustache. The audience was thrilled. «You must be courageous. You must be as brave and as valiant as Dalí. Nothing must stand in the way... not *gendarmes* or earthquakes, foes or friends. Wealth maketh many friends. They mean nothing, nothing, no - thing, no - thing».

He was waving his arms and his eyes were jumping about as if on the end of springs. «Nothing», he said once more. Then, more calmly: «You must acquire a very beautiful suit, a black evening suit with long tails, a white shirt and a white tie, the most elegant, most beautiful suit in Paris...».

The people near us were as quiet as shadows and, having snared their attention, Dalí lowered his high rhythmic voice and resumed in a tone of intimate secrecy. «Come here every night at midnight wearing your beautiful suit and carrying a basket of roses. Go from table to table and leave a bloom on each one. Smile. Be beautiful. Never speak. Be elegant and silent. In two months, people will be flocking to the *Closerie*. Everyone in Paris will be saying: What is this marvellous apparition that comes to give away roses? Directors and producers will arrive with contracts in their pockets. You will be the talk of Paris».

He turned up the volume of his voice to its normal pitch and told me a story: It was 1939. The Civil War had just come to an end in Spain and a more gruesome war was about to consume the world. How could a young Spaniard with barely a word of English compete for space on the front pages of New York's newspapers

with Hitler's blitzkrieg on Poland, Churchill's arms deal with Roosevelt, Clark Gable's not giving a damn for Vivien Leigh and Judy Garland falling in love with The Wizard of Oz? Could it be done? Could Dalí find a way?

He had arrived in New York on the first occasion in the autumn of 1934 on board the ss *Champlain* and, stepping ashore carrying a three-metre baguette, he announced his much repeated claim: «The only difference between me and a madman is that I am not mad». New York had been faintly amused. The show had been mildly successful. Julien Levy, Dalí's dealer, who would one day fall prey to McCarthy commie-phobia, had bought the landscape of melting watches called *The Persistence of Memory* for \$250 and sold it for \$350. There were a few other sales; a few politely intrigued notices.

Five years had passed. New York was hosting Dalí's first one-man show in America. Caresse Crosby, the wealthy widow with a penchant for all things white, was throwing a party. Julien Levy was as busy as an insect. He had arranged for Dalí to decorate two of the windows at the Bonwit Teller store on Fifth Avenue. He left the Divine with Gala and, behind a screen, they sewed seeds that grew like Jack's beanstalk into an alcazar filled with golden eggs.

Was it planned or was it luck? Was it coincidence or fate? Was Dalí a genius or a hustler? Would I ever know for sure?

He entitled the windows «Night» and «Day» and dressed them with all the lewd, bizarre surrealism in his soul. At «Night», he showed a naked figure sleeping on black satin sheets, its head resting on a pillow of burning coals. Above, a buffalo head like a monster in a dream was gorging on a crushed pigeon dripping blood. During the «Day», a bath tub lined with black fur had been filled with water and awaited a louche mannequin clad in nothing but red hair and green feathers. The displays, both erotic and anarchic, posed un-American questions about love, death and sex. The store managers were unsure about many things but in one area they were unanimous: the designs were indecent and hideous. They replaced the immodest mannequins with some shiny new ones sensibly dressed, added a few lights and told the cleaners to tidy up.

Dalí was furious when he saw the result. He swept into the Day exhibit, assaulted the demure mannequin with a few swift karate chops and, using all his maniacal strength, in overturning the bath

tub, he smashed the plate glass window, flooded Fifth Avenue and stepped out of Bonwit Teller as a shard of glass like a guillotine crashed down at his heels, just missing his neck. He walked into the arms of a passing policeman unmoved by the hissing torrent of vernacular Latin and, in hand-cuffs, a patrol car with klaxon wailing sped Dalí to jail.

The crowd applauded and Gala rushed off to find Julien Levy.

When the dealer extracted from the artist a promise that he would never do it again, the charge of malicious damage was reduced to disorderly conduct and Salvador Dalí landed with a splash on to the front pages of the morning papers. That night, the show opened with lines of people queuing to get in. More than twenty paintings were sold and Dalí engraved his name on the American imagination.

He sat back, pleased with himself, and finished the fruit salad like a hungry wolf. His words were part of a great tidal wave that washed over me and on nights when the afternoon espresso chases sleep from my four-poster bed it is a nagging, echoing regret that I didn't take his advice and haunt the *Closerie des Lilas* with a basket of roses. All success begins with a *cause célèbre* and requires infinite patience. I know that now. Everything that can be done has been done but there was still room for new eccentricities in 1969. The patchouli oil I wore behind my ears and the kohl that highlighted my eyes had made me a curiosity in Paris, but I needed to take another step, a more dramatic step. Dalí knew these things intuitively. As a small boy he learned that he only had to break down in a screaming rage for his parents to give in to his every whim. One son named Salvador had died. They were taking special care with the second. At school, he threw himself down flights of stairs and won the esteem of the other pupils. At University, in Madrid, he told the examiners they were intellectually ill-equipped to judge his work and was expelled. He had no desire to gain a degree and commence a career as a teacher! When he arrived in Paris the first time, he went to see Picasso before going to the Louvre and told Picasso as much. He won hearts and sucked them dry. He was a vampire, constantly moving, constantly feeding, constantly incensed by the smell of fresh blood.

He took my arm as we left the *Closerie des Lilas*: «Never trust the

English», he whispered.

We met at the *Meurice* after the show. It was late. He was alone, which was rare, looking old and shabby like a circus clown on his day off. He was occupying a small table in the main salon where a man who might have been Beethoven was playing Rachmaninoff with a slow, melancholic touch. There were only two other customers, two women, one fat, one thin, with glasses of tisane and the appearance of abandoned glove puppets. «Dikes. They imagine they're Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas», Dalí said. He grinned, in his own distinctive way, like a boy playing truant from school. Gala was in suite 108 above. «She's sleeping», he informed me, rushing me out to a waiting taxi that hummed through the night to Bastille.

He looked better away from the crystal light of the hotel chandeliers in the flashing lights of the *Perroquet Rouge*. «It is a pleasure when the student instructs the master», he said, his arm on my shoulder as we wound our way down into the club. The King of the Gypsies was standing at the bottom of the steps as if waiting for us and gave Dalí a glass of anís. Dalí stared at it for a long time. It was as if the world had stopped. Then he sniffed it, gave an appreciative nod, stuck two fingers in and dabbed the spirit behind his ears.

The Maasai appeared and led us to a table. She took Dalí's palm and he slid it under her red cloak and into the folds of her blouse. «I read breasts», he said. «They tell you every - thing, every - thing. ...». His eyes rolled and rolled and I thought they were going to spill from their sockets. The Maasai looked shocked in a theatrical way but made no attempt to stop him.

«We shall play Metamorphosis», she announced. The Gypsy sat with a bottle of anís and then the schoolgirl joined us.

«Do you know who I am?», the Gypsy said in a dark tone.

«You are Antonio Ordóñez», answered Dalí without pause and, brushing away the Gypsy's attempts to regain the lead, he introduced the girl with the name he used for all pretty blondes: «This is Ginesta», he said, staring at her with the fixed, sticky way he had. «Do you know who I am? I am Da - lí. This is Violetera and that is Aphrodite Obscura. She has marvellous tits».

«You want to play?» she said.

«Always», Dalí replied.

«You have only five more minutes to exist as a human being. You must become an animal. Any animal. Choose, and quickly. Time is running out...».

«It is always running out...».

«Quickly, all of you. Make your choices».

«You, torero, what kind of animal are you?», Dalí demanded.

«I am a lion», the Gypsy roared.

Dalí was a chameleon; the girl a dolphin; I transmogrified into a seagull; everyone had been reading *Jonathan Livingstone Seagull* at the time.

The Maasai sadly shook her head. «There isn't any room for lions, chameleons, dolphins or seagulls. You must make a second choice. You have only five seconds...».

«A Doberman pinscher», said the Gypsy.

«A poodle», said the girl.

«A giraffe», I said.

«... a shark», said Dalí.

«Your first choice is what you like to think you are», said the Maasai. «The second is what you are».

The drinkers at the table drank more anís and the smokers smoked hashish blessed in Manali. The Doberman snapped at the shark but the shark moved constantly, quickly, like a fencer in a duel with words squired by the peerless command of diverse radiant thought. Dalí rattled out ideas in a cocktail of French, Spanish, Catalan, English and Latin until the King of the Gypsies fled with his poodle and I danced alone leaving the Divine with Aphrodite Obscura.

It was very late when we left. The narrow street was milky blue. The Maasai loped along in jungle strides. We walked for a long time, climbing slowly. We saw no one. The buildings grew taller. The street lamps disappeared and I was glad of the starshine, a carpet taking me to some place alien.

I followed the Maasai through a green door and up an iron staircase. Dalí was in the rear, his cane tapping out the sound of rain on a window. The stairs came to an end after more flights than I could count and we arrived at an enormous loft infused with the bouquet of frankincense. It was not a living room for living in but being in: a being room without tables or chairs, ashtrays or bibelots,

a room where you left your former self at the door and entered like a convert to kneel at the baptistry of a new religion. The ceiling was way above, a mosaic of clear glass, black as sky, a picture of ordered chaos. The walls were hidden behind artfully placed drapes in silk and satin, in hues of red, copper and gold; brocades, kilims, jousting flags, flying carpets suspended on silver wires. They moved almost imperceptibly on the currents of hidden breezes, ghost winds, shimmering mirages that strayed among the shadows.

I thought I saw Laura Jamieson. She was wearing the long Afghan coat she was later to give me because I adored long things. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw my mother. She had grown older, thinner, more distant. There were lines at the corners of her mouth; deep creases scarred her cheeks. She was with a man in a white suit. He was wearing an emerald ring and smoking a cigar. I approached: Papa, Papa, I said, and he disappeared.

Dalí was flicking the hanging drapes with his cane. He appeared mysterious and furtive, a chameleon more than a shark. How greatly we imagine we know each other and how little we do. The incense was numbing. My head was a Chinese puzzle, a complex of wooden shapes that fit together to make a perfect sphere, or don't.

Music emerged from far away beyond the moving strips of silk and satin. A cello, bruised and alone. The anís was scraping holes from the soft places behind my eyes. The Maasai had thrown off her red cloak and was slowly unbuttoning her blouse. She let it slip from her shoulders. She moved into the reflected maze of a triptych mirror and looked at herself. It was a critical examination, not at all vain, more clinical. Dalí had found a cushion and had spread himself out like a waiting monarch.

«*C'est colossal*. You have fabulous breasts», he said.

She stepped out of her boots and long skirt. «They should be», she said. She continued to study her image in the glass, front and back. This was for her own benefit, or pleasure, I realized, not ours. The music was sombre, like ocean waves at night, rhythmic and invisible. She was wearing pink lace panties cut high at the sides, lengthening her long legs. She kept them on.

«You are beau - ti - ful».

The Maasai opened a window and the draught of air fingered the floating veils, lifting them and revealing more cushions



scattered in piles like rocks on the sand. There was a brass bed with black sheets, two metres across and two metres long. Behind it were numerous photographs of the Maasai, all square, like the bed, all the same size, too small to study until I drew closer. She was posing in the formal, faintly irritated way of the fashion model, displaying her breasts with disdain, turning to show a neat bottom and turning again to expose something I had not been expecting although perhaps I had. It was a penis, coiled like a sea urchin between her slender thighs.

She had moved behind me. Her two hands played over my hips and into my red velvet trousers. My head was swimming, spinning, just slowly, in time to the music, the movement of the hanging drapes. My clothes fell away and I came to rest on the big brass bed like a wrecked ship on a desert island. I was very tired.

Like a man taking a drink from a lake, cupping his hands and lifting the water to his lips, the Maasai took me into her mouth and I shed my seed in the barren soil of her warm and tender throat. Dalí watched.

## *Duende*

He liked to watch. He liked to masturbate. And, sometimes, though not often, he liked to do both at once.

The final act of my initiation into the inner court took place the night Maruja Garrido came to dance the flamenco at the *Meurice*. A small stage had been set up where the pianist normally played and Maruja had moved her show from the Olympia to the hotel just for Dalí. A diverse group had gathered with grinning faces and occasional bursts of ¡Olé! Edward James was standing on a chair like some gargantuan dwarf clapping three fingers from one hand into the palm of the other, the way you are supposed to, and it occurred to me that to be a success it is invariably best to do what you are not supposed to do. I had arrived late, after *Hair*, wearing a vest with thin straps the night was so warm.

The guests cheered as the dance came to an end. At that moment, I entered the crystal room.

«Look at this fantastic skeleton. It is beau - ti - ful...». Dalí had come immediately to his feet and escorted me around the table. «He's the most wonderful dancer», he told Maruja and she x-rayed me with her sullen Arab eyes. She wasn't young or old but intense in the flamenco fashion.

«Does he have *duende*?» she said in scorching Andaluz and Dalí gravely nodded.

«Here», he informed her. «In the clavicle. This point is mag - ni - fi - que». He continued to walk me around the room telling everyone to rub my collarbones for luck. He introduced me to a Japanese collector. «This is the Red Guard. Say good night, Violetera», he said and, by the animation in his moustache and the gleam in his eye, he managed to convey to his guests the party was over, and to me that it was about to begin. The cheerful little man

called the Red Guard, as all Orientals were called the Red Guard, was bowing as he walked out backwards. Princess Napoleon gave me a flower. Louis XIV and Prince Dado had silently left, both tall and in black like exquisite Inquisitors. Half the Twins had gone and the other half was going.

«*Au revoir*», Dalí called to the one named Dennis Myers. Or was it John Myers? Castor and Pollux was far more fitting. The Twins were a vaudeville turn. Each finished the other's sentences on those rare occasions when they deigned to speak in company and, with each other, their sequence of sounds in staccato were mere motes of dust in the beam of their extraordinary telepathy. They were exotically handsome. Dark and carved. Cecil Beaton had photographed them and Ken Russell had put them in *The Music Lovers* as the sons of the contessa who became Tchaikovsky's patron.

«When I first saw them I thought I was witnessing a miracle. Narcissus and his reflection in Port Lligat. God must be Greek... Good bye, *au revoir*, *bonjour!*».

Maruja Garrido approached with a cape around her shoulders and a chaperone with a cigar butt and a scar. «You were delectable», Dalí told her. «Tonight, I smelt the breath of the *duende*. I felt his fingers on my spine. Your dance is the divine manna in the wilderness famine. The gleaming pearl of antediluvian rain in the burning heart. Very Dalinian».

Maruja smiled and the scarred man as if connected by hidden wires smiled a smile that zigzagged across his face. We were edging our way towards the elevator and Dalí slid in pulling me with him as Edward James approached.

«Her neck's sagging. She must be like a crocodile in bed», Dalí said. I pressed the button for floor one and he gave a prodigious sigh of relief. He was unable to work the elevator. Or open car doors, or unscrew lids, or turn on the light, and was so happy when people did all these things for him. «We have a surprise for you, Carlitos», he said as the door opened.

We passed the royal rooms and entered the suite opposite: the unknown. My body was tingling. He who never smiled was smiling as he held a stiff finger to his lips. Then he pointed and we peered together from the salon through a two-way mirror that had been set

up over the door to one of the bedrooms. A boy and girl, both naked, were just beginning to make love. She was young and very pretty with long dark hair and sharply defined bones. «She is a virgin», he whispered. «The boy is her brother».

The girl had the face of a china doll and her eyes strayed over the ceiling as if scanning the map of a forgotten island. Her brother's lips were pulled back over his teeth and as he thrust into her I imagined a wild dog in the street. Then, another image occurred to me: I saw the sewing machine. The boy was stitching an invisible coat with rich gossamer threads of bodily fluids and blood. Dalí was rubbing my collarbones and rubbed even harder as half the Twins appeared with a shiny limousine searching for a parking place. The girl's mouth yawned open. It began to seem like a dream, like a scene from Fellini's *Satyricon*. Dalí was at his most joyful. This was his *raison d'être*, his Truth, his triumph. It was a show. Dalí was the director and the actors yearned to perform. They wanted to give the gift of themselves to him and yet I had the feeling that it had all been arranged for me: to change me, snare me, to snap me up like whitebait. Dalí was a hook and the world was his aquarium. He had a power that was incalculable, intangible, illogical, subtle and terrifying. He was, more than anyone ever understood, a tutor, the master of twentieth century desire and reasoning. His philosophy found life a cruel and heartless joke; a sombre and extravagant passage from nothing into nothing. His teaching was abstract, impressionistic, surrealist and it filled your mind so brim full there was little room for the self. As I walked through the Paris streets I would look in shop windows for things that would amuse Dalí: a kitsch Jesus in a plastic frame; heather from the hand of a gypsy; a furry gonk on elastic. «I am Da - lí; Da - lí. You must bring me presents. I adore presents».

I was dazed. Or cretinized. His eyes were popping and the tips of his moustache were twitching like antennae. He caressed my collarbones one last time and then the master of surprises surprised me once again. He opened the garage and drew out his limousine.

It was like taking LSD. I was unnerved, bemused, puzzled. The scenes in the bedroom seemed normal but Dalí with his penis in the palm of his hand was outrageous; even sad. And there was something else: Dalí did not like his penis. It was too small. Or too

something. He was an aesthete with an appendage he despised. You must love your own penis. You must love yourself in order to love others, and this was the Divine's dilemma: he did not love anyone. He respected Gala. He was amused by Louis XIV, by Amanda, by me. But the love that sprang occasionally to his lips was absent from his heart. «Love is a ghost. We may talk about the phantom but who has seen him?».

Dalí throttled the shrivelled serpent that as a skinny boy he hid between his legs pretending he was a girl, and seeing the great painter and teacher and patron in this performance confused me and stayed with me like the knife scar scribbled across the cheek of Don Flamenco. Even when masturbating you need to draw imaginary pictures of your object of love. Dalí's canvas was blank and his features had grown feral and anguished.

He stopped when Dado Ruspoli entered the room. «Say how do you do to the Prince», he said quaintly.

I put my hand out and Dado put his thing into it. His thing. I shook it. It was the only thing to do. «The Prince has the largest limousine ever», Dalí said proudly. «The biggest polla in history». And it was. It was like a painting. The Prince was like a painting: tall and balding with a big Roman nose and a high aristocratic forehead. He had the dull clever eyes of an opium eater and very big hands. He began masturbating. So did Dalí. Together. Like two windmills on the high plains of La Mancha.

Then the wind ceased. They paused in unison. There was a chair in the centre of the room. Dalí urged me to stand on it and, as he put a bouquet of tuberose into my arms, I couldn't help but think of Edward James. He would so loved to have been there in the room at that moment. «You are the Angel», Dalí said sweetly. He held my chin and turned my head to one side. «You must look up», he added and, arranging the flowers, I became a figure in ecstasy in Botticelli's *Mystic Nativity*, the centre piece for a tableau vivant. Dado removed the two-way mirror and the two men continued to masturbate, the Prince with the finest member in Europe and the Divine with his little object of despair.

I had been instructed to look up but I was looking down as well. Of course. I had never seen anything like this before in my life and I had never seen Dalí so excited. He was prancing back and forth. I

could hear rhythmic gurgles and gasps issuing from the bedroom. Dado was very relaxed with his monster, very patient. He was waiting for Dalí. Dalí was impotent he always said. He needed more help than others.

Like two nymphs in the Garden of Delight, Louis XIV and Tina Declerc, Dado's lover, the daughter of the Chilean ambassador, entered the salon and stood in the background. Then, the Virgin joined us with her brother and the Twin, completing the diorama Dalí had carefully arranged. It was the moment. He screamed. His whole body shuddered. He had made it. He caught his milky speck of orgasm in his palm, rushed over to the girl and like the Pope made the sign of the cross on her forehead with his semen. «*Post coitum omne animal triste*».

Dado exploded like a prehistoric volcano and the two men left the alien suite for Dalí's own rooms across the corridor. «The submarine was invented by a Catalan anarchist», he was saying. He motioned to me and I followed. There was champagne in ice buckets the Prince and I opened. «Narciso Monturiol is the greatest man in history. Greater than Picasso. Greater than Don Quixote. If I were not me, the Divine, I would want to be Narciso Monturiol. We were born in the very same street, you know. Almost the same house. He was banished to Cadaqués because the bourgeois, being afraid of the putrefaction of their own atavistic regression, believe all things new belong to the forces of Mephistopheles. He watched the divers at Cap de Creus, sat down and designed *Ictineo*, his beautiful submarine».

The Twin came in wearing the expression of an old worn statue and Dalí told Dado a story: John and Dennis Myers had arrived in Cadaqués with Baron Ernst von Wedel, a German. They stood outside Dalí's house in Port Lligat and waited for him to appear. When he appeared he saw Narcissus and his reflection and invited them to join him for drinks at seven. The Divine sat in the garden on his big chair like King Canute. Seven passed. And eight. And nine. The darkness rolled in across the bay and still there was no sign of Castor and Pollux. They turned up the following day. At seven.

Said Castor: «Drinking all...».

«... afternoon», said Pollux.

«Slept», said Castor.

«Tired», said Pollux.

Dalí did a stunning imitation of the Twins talking and the American playwright Julia Parr even believes he learned his curious English from them. Castor (or Pollux) just stood there, confident and composed, as if playing out his role in *The Music Lovers*, the role John and Dennis are still playing in Cadaqués as these memories of the past emerge as words in the present...

Dado laughed. He was a happy man. He kissed Tina on the cheek. She was his tour de force. They had met in Rome. She had been a convent girl in white ankle socks, as pure as Monday morning bed sheets. The idyll. What girl or woman or boy or man could resist a real life prince? She had been wooed and won and Dado taught her *everything*.

«... they are afraid of all things new because the progress of life is towards death. The unchanging is revered because it gives the false feeling of fending off the ultimate disaster. Change is only to be feared when it cannot be ignored. The bourgeois does not understand this. He goes through life like a fly in search of the spider's web. Arrogance is our sole protector. Arrogance is the burden of the young and the Divine Dalí shall always be young and beau - ti - ful».

The King appeared and Dalí bent to kiss her hand. She looked magnificent in black and took a glass of champagne from the Prince in such a way that I realized and relished and finally understood Dalí's appreciation of what it was to be truly sophisticated, truly aristocratic. It has everything to do with titles and lineage. We do not want our nobles to be merely noble, he would say, people whose virtue and moral leadership compensate for their privileges of wealth and rank. No, no, no. The aristocracy must be excessive, decadent, immoral and eccentrically out of the ordinary. Louis XIV, married to a prince, with the bearing of a princess, was the daughter of a Castilian grandee who wrote scandalous novels under the pseudonym Caballero Aldac. He named his little girl Amberina to honour her amber eyes and everyone knew her as Nanita! She was special: a race horse, an Hispano-Suiza, Sunday's child full of

grace, as upright as a wand, a shining star in the cosmic galaxy of high society; a dear friend of JFK and Jackie, the sun and moon of the era. She introduced the Kennedys to Dalí and instinctively he proceeded to outshine them.

«The Divine was a blend of Don Juan and Charlie Chaplin. So funny. So awfully handsome with his green eyes and quick nervous gestures. He was brilliant and wonderful», the King had said that day at the funeral.

They had first met in 1955. Dalí was with Gala. She was with her husband. Two Spaniards and two Russians. Dalí said within a second of their encounter. «You are the Sun-King. We shall see each other every day for the rest of our lives». They became instant friends. She was like a mistress, an ally, a Madame du Barry of the mind, a beautiful, cultured, high ranking, emancipated woman who formed the very cornerstone of Dalí's court. «There is a difference between pornography and erotica. Eroticism has class...».

Louis XIV had class. She had *duende*. She brushed her golden hair from her face, then ate some cherries. The season had come and they filled a crystal bowl, claret red, luxuriously plump. They made Dalí think of incest. And cannibalism. He wanted to eat his consort. She stood at his side and I thought what a gorgeous couple they made. They were lovers without being lovers. His masterpiece *The Great Masturbator* had not been randomly named. He loathed touching or being touched. He had no desire to make love with anyone but himself. «I tried sex once with a woman and that woman was Gala. It was over rated. I tried sex once with a man and that man was the famous juggler Federico García Lorca. It was ve - r - y pa - in - ful...».

The Virgin entered with all the stage craft of an ingénue. She was very pretty. So brave. She was wearing a short skirt and a tie-dye top. She was French, a little hippie who believed in peace, flowers and free love, the same as me, the same as a whole generation. How fortunate Dalí was to be so famed and feted at that historic moment. The Surrealists had envisaged a world freed from the restraints of western morality and it was all coming to pass at the *Hôtel Meurice*. Marx and Freud had offered mankind fresh paradigms for politics and psychology. It had been left to Dalí to explore the empire of sexual liberation and he did so with the



religious zeal of the conquistadors in the land of my birth. The Divine liked money, power, success, deference. But, most of all, he liked orgies.

The *femme-enfant* giggled as the champagne bubbles tickled her freckled retroussé nose. She had done what she had done for Dalí. He was El Mago, the magician from the Tarot. He was wearing black, a black suit and a black shirt, a symbol he said of the void surrounding all activity. He was drinking water, swiftly, one glass after another, and staring at the girl as if for the first time. Her brother was trying not to grin. The Twin was expressionless. He took a bowl of opium from the Prince. Castor would lose all his teeth one day. So would his brother. Opium does that.

«*C'est extraordinaire*». Dalí stood back, eyes popping, arms in the air. «*C'est extraordinaire*», he said again. Silence gripped us. «*Monseigneur*. Look: she is Moreau's *Thracian Girl*. We have admired her together. At the museum. I can see the head of Orpheus in her embrace».

«Yes, yes. Of course».

He gazed at the girl and she shook with delight. «Why didn't I notice it before. You are the Thracian. It is a miracle. It is fantastic...». He gasped and slapped the back of his own hand. «Gala's going to castrate me. I must stop saying fan - ta - st - ic. It is unbecoming for a genius. Tautology is redundant and hyperbole in Gala's ears is a sign of villainous intent».

Someone spoke but he was too happy to listen. His eyes were as bright as the moon hanging low outside the window. He was a little boy at the foot of a Christmas tree. «Give the Princess of Thrace more champagne, *Violetera*», he instructed. «You are the Angel and she is our guest of honour. How foolish are these flower babies who take the first nobody not worth his own piss to shatter their mystic hymen. The Princess will remember this day for the rest of her life. She has given her little prize to Dalí and Dalí has given her the gift of eternal youth». He pointed at her forehead. «Nietzsche told us the male sperm is the greatest fuel of creativity. The Hindus perform coitus in multifarious variations with the intention of reabsorbing their own semen. They drive their orgasm, not into the shakta, but back into the fluids of their own body. Women in New York spend whole days in the back rows of cinemas in search of dark

erections». He ran his palms over his face. «Male semen is a face cream, the nitrogenous constituents of this living essence acting as an elixir that restores the flesh through the transmutation of the spirit. She who receives the gift of the Divine semen shall be forever young and beau - ti - ful». He paused and his expression became playful. «I have invented a new game. It is called: Kafka's Coffin».

He glared at me with one of those stinging looks as he explained the rules and we had two minutes to metamorphose into the usual flock of seagulls, poodles, striped tigers, a carousel horse. Dalí liked the game so much he had liberated it from the Maasai. She wandered into the conversation from time to time. It was our secret. He enjoyed secrets and shared them always. He was not like anyone else. He was a shark. Lorca the poet whom he had admired sufficiently to invite him into his own body said *duende* is the driving passion the artist feels but no one can explain. Dalí had *duende*.

## *Cadaqués*

There was a patch of aquamarine light that gleamed like a cat's eye before fleeing behind the grey landscape. It could have been a mirage; train fatigue; wishful thinking? I was exhausted. Summer had come and with it Dalí had vacated Paris for Spain, land of my hidden memories.

I had given him a rose on the platform at the Gare de Lyon the morning he left and he mentioned this gift with the recurrence of a new obsession. We spoke almost every day.

«She is peering at me from the corner like a mistress avid for my touch. A rose is a rose aging with dignity. I am working seventeen hours a day, Carlitos. Is it showing? How do I look?».

«*Guapo*».

«Only *guapo*?».

«Ravishingly so».

He was a telephone person and adored calling at unkind hours with new revelations of his genius. «I have unearthed vital solutions to the problems in thermo-nuclear physics. If  $E = mc^2$   $D = me^2$ . You must read Einstein, Violetera. Look at his photograph. He has the eyes of Dalí».

Then, I had four days off from *Hair*. «How marvellous. *C'est colossal*. You must come to Cadaqués. Get the train and I'll have Arturo meet you at the station». He laughed. «If he can find it! I was going to send him to Pa - r - is but he'd get lost he's so stupid. I wanted him to collect something but...». His words trailed off into a sigh.

«In Paris?», I prompted.

«Mijanou Bardot has made me some cushions. They should have been ready before we left but you know these art - istes! They can be so temperamental...».

«I can bring them...».

«No, no, no, no, no...».

«Really. It's the least I can do».

«No, no, no, no, no...».

«I'd like to».

«It's too much».

«I insist...».

«Only if you promise you don't mind, Carlitos». He could be so sweet.

«I promise», I replied.

There were four of them. Each about the size of a sofa. Like four half-filled helium balloons. Like a moving amorphous cloud of scarlet velvet, sensual and endless. The French authorities were thrilled to be rid of the grotesques and also the long hair herding them. The Spanish customs —three men with pencil moustaches— barred my way. One unclipped his pistol holster and another ran back to the office to summon reinforcements.

I threw up my hands in surrender. I was petrified. It was a scene from *Casablanca*. Slowly, guardedly, I produced my passport, working permit, American Green Card, a review from Hair and a laundry ticket. «Salvador Dalí», I explained.

«Dalí?».

«Dalí».

It was the magic word. They began to fondle their bellies and hips with calming strokes. One of them lit a cigarette. «*Almohadas?*», he ventured.

«*Sí, almohadas*».

«*Grandes*».

«*Muy grandes*».

The man smiled and his moustache became a straight line. I had taken a step back through the centuries. I was in Spain speaking Spanish. The countryside was different and felt oddly familiar; parched and green by turn. France had the flavour of wine matured in old wooden barrels. Spain tasted of blood and sand, the colours of the national flag hanging limp over the immigration building. The sun had remained hot as it lowered into the far hills: a spot of yellow on a sheet of brilliant blue. The tones were primary: dense; unequivocal. I felt giddy with anticipation. The air was scorched

and ancient. On the very rim of my perceptions I detected another sensation, fresh and intoxicating: the tang of the sea I had never seen: the Mediterranean.

My passport was stamped and we loaded the cushions into the Spanish train. I glanced out of the window and watched the custom's man reclippping his holster. He raised his arm in salute and looked just like Mussolini.

Arturo Caminada was waiting in Figueres. We had not met before but there was a scarcity of Colombian Indians travelling with four red sofas. We squeezed one of them into the back of the old Cadillac (standing now in a private rainstorm in the *Teatro Museo*) and deposited the other three with the station master. «We left a baby elephant here once», Arturo said.

I turned with a faint smile for the little crowd that had gathered around the car. It was fun being a celebrity. The people waved and I peered out at the Spanish faces as we moved along a street lined with clumsy buildings and untidy trees. This was where Dalí had been born. Where he went to school. Where he exhibited his first paintings. Where he would come to die. It seemed so ordinary: the four-storey houses with narrow balconies and shutters thirsting for paint. The grey streets, the old men in cafés staring at absolutely nothing. Figueres reminded me of Barranquilla, time-soiled and forlorn, gloomy churches with broad towers like giant cats squatting on the horizon.

I had become a Parisian. I had moved into a big house called Villa Parc Montserie with geraniums in pots outside and sheer madness filling the space within. Jean-Pierre Kalfon, Pierre Clementi, Marie-France the transvestite and I were living the sixties: parties, pot and a brioche with my afternoon coffee. I was speaking French and diligently evading my potential. I left the theatre at ten thirty and partied till five. I slept when I should have been taking dance classes, diction classes, singing classes, inventing myself, planning a career. I was smoking, drinking, playing with LSD. I was living it and sleeping it and considered life one vast creative process, when Dalí was always telling me creativity grows from routine and discipline. «We are the masters of our own ship and the source of our own treacherous currents...».

Arturo sniffed a good deal and stared furtively through the windscreen. He drove slowly and said little. Figueres disappeared and soon we began to climb from the plain on a serpentine road that sliced through hills that were stark and powerful. The undulating slopes had been cut in countless steps that rose in concentric circles to each crest like paths in a maze, the walls of blue-grey stone forming one immense work of art. The terraces had taken hundreds of years to build and yet, with a few sporadic exceptions, gave refuge to nothing but weeds, some tortured cacti, the occasional olive tree too old to bare fruit. I wondered why the terraces had fallen into disuse.

«There were no men to tend them. We were Republicans. And proud of it. Everyone left when the Nationalists arrived», Arturo said and he spat out the window. He seemed saddened by my questions. The civil war had come to an end in 1939, but was kept alive under the military dictatorship. We were in Catalonia, the north east province, where the people were barred from speaking Catalan, their own tongue, and barred from dancing *sardanas*, the traditional dance. They lived in fear, not great fear, but the tiny, ethereal fear cast by the shadow of General Franco. Films were censored. Girls in bikinis were blanketed in jackets and hurried screaming from the beaches by Civil Guards in tricorne hats whose very shape made me think of the dark aboriginal spirits that lie beneath the *façade* of civilization.

It seemed passé and absurd. Thirty years had gone by. This was 1969. The performers in *Hair* appeared naked on stage. We were experimenting with new ideals and new religions. The word «hippie» may sound vacuous to some ears today but not to us, not then. It was a movement with caring ingenuous values and its adherents were pledged to peace, love and freedom. I had crossed the border from France and arrived on another planet. Spain was patriarchal; so anal. So haunting. The landscape was hard not soft like the palm fringed coast of my childhood, but it was my childhood that permeated my mind as we wove our way through the silent hills.

I closed my eyes and saw a small boy walking around the port looking at the boats tethered to the harbour wall. I always wanted to leave and I was always alone. When I went to school I was alone.

At playtime I was alone. I was always too tall. Or too brown. Or too something. I had always thought I was an ugly duckling and still study the mirror in search of the swan that Dalí could see.

At home my mother loved me in the way you would love a souvenir from a treasured vacation. You want it there, but in a drawer, on a high shelf, in a cupboard. My grandmother was a religious woman with a wooden rosary polished by endless prayer. She wore black dresses that shimmered and rustled as she moved through the house with lips sealed beneath the veil of an eternal melancholy. In her hair she wore a red ribbon she washed every morning, ironing it between her fingers and plaiting it wet in coils she gathered at the back of her neck. I would quietly watch. It was a quiet house caged in chiaroscuro bars of light and shadow, a house without music, without laughter. I never misbehaved; never.

My mother's light-hearted sister would arrive with an unwanted trinket and a smile that vanished as soon as she entered the door. The women would drink coffee with plates of homemade biscuits and talk about women's things in mournful voices. My life consisted of timorous women and solitude and I learned to enjoy the company of one. «This child will ruin his eyes he's always reading», my mother remarked and her mother calmly nodded as she counted her beads. I read stories about fathers reading stories to their children. I liked reading. All knowledge comes through reading Dalí said. Sometimes those fathers had to go away on long journeys. But they always returned with magical gifts. I yearned for a father. I roamed the docks looking at the men in white suits smoking cigars while their shoes were shined, and in every one he was there in my fantasy.

My real father I would meet briefly and only once. He had a grand name. It was Carlos Consuegra. I liked saying it to myself and said it loudly when I passed the men in white suits. They were all very rich and the rich are different: they have no shame; they have an aura, not saintly but certain, an aura only the envious are privileged to see. My grandfather had been a port official and officials in South American ports are not known to be incorruptible. «All success starts in scandal and all great fortunes begin with a great theft».

The Consuegras lived in the El Prado district, the best quarter, in

a white house with chandeliers and maids who took people's hats when they arrived at the door. I stood at the gate sometimes. Most of the guests were Europeans. The Consuegras cherished the roots of the family tree that had crossed the ocean from Andalusia and overlooked the vast clumsy boughs and branches that patterned the new world. The maids were Indians like my mother and grandmother and when they saw me they chased me away.

I read my stories. One day, one of those rich men was going to turn with tears in his eyes. He would pick me up and hug me with all the passion of long lost joy. «You are a Prince», he would say. «A Royal Spanish Indian Prince. And I am your father».

I opened my eyes. Arturo drove the car like a fisherman at the helm of a boat. The buildings dotting the hillside were abandoned farms with punctured roofs and coarse grass climbing through the stonework. The road ended at a void at the most gruesome corners and I looked down into deep gorges where the silhouettes weaved vast prismatic baskets. I saw a peasant cursing a donkey loaded with twigs. Then, I saw the patch of aquamarine light, a fleeting spectre like something glimpsed from the corner of the eye. The track climbed a long sweeping curve and finally plunged into the pages of one of my childhood picture books.

This was Cadaqués, a cluster of white houses nestling as if for protection around the buttressed walls of a primitive church, a few cobbled streets laced with flowers and trees, the Mediterranean filling a bay shaped as if from the casual bite of an enormous mouth. Boats rocked like a row of cradles at the water's edge where old seamen gazed out at the horizon in search of something gone. Behind the village, two dark hills like Egyptian sarcophagi rose into the distance and when the sun went down it would slip through the cleavage as if guided by destiny. It was biblical. I could imagine Jesus the Fish walking on the glassy surface of the sea.

Arturo stopped at a shop where a pile of newspapers were waiting for collection. He drove around a square of mature cypresses and turned into a lane so narrow I was surprised the Cadillac went through. We passed an old cemetery on the crest of a hill and the road unwound itself at a small bay called Port Lligat. A maid in uniform appeared and I gasped. She looked me up and down suspiciously. «He's waiting», she said and, while Arturo began



teasing the red cloud from the back of the car, I approached the labyrinth.

The house was not a house but a surrealist château pressed into the cliffs and embellished with giant eggs, giant tea cups planted with olive trees, a full-sized camel to remind Dalí of the trace of family blood that had come with the Moors from Africa. The stone puzzle had begun life as an adobe cottage owned by the village witch Mad Lidia. She sold it to Dalí and Dalí gradually acquired the adjoining cottage, and the next one, and the next, growing with the architect of chance.

Inside, the floors were at different levels so you were constantly climbing and descending stairs, turning as if on the coils of a corkscrew. I was in a state of continual surprise and wonderment. It was a museum of the kitsch and the sublime. At the entrance a huge bear taller than a man was standing with arms encompassing dozens of walking canes and a body festooned in pendants and beads. Its glass eyes were cloudy but its memory was a treasure trove. After swimming one day, King Umberto of Italy had nowhere to change and hid discreetly behind the bear not knowing the tilt of the mirror made this secret corner Dalí's domain. «He had very hairy legs and a very small Fiat».

We passed through a room with a glass ceiling and another shaped like an egg. A stuffed eagle hung above and on the back wall was the head of a white rhinoceros with horns filed by El Mago for his secret concoctions. Around the head was the harness from a horse used in the corrida and a bell Dalí would ring when he wanted attention which was always.

We entered the garden where silvery lizards basked on the warm stones and the pink flowers on the tamarisks had a perfume that reached into the approaching night like the embrace of a lover. Everyone was drinking pink champagne. The maid wore pink. Her name was Rosa. Swallows darted in circles overhead and in the shadows, like unknown relations at a wedding, stood a gathering of statues from Catalan mythology. The guests occupied chairs with too many legs and chairs made from wooden spoons. At the very centre there were two thrones where Dalí and Gala sat like the King and Queen in the Land of Onirus. He was wearing a steely blue space suit zipped to the throat, black espadrilles and a red Catalan

beret the same colour as the velvet cushions.

«Do you have my little *almohadas*?».

«Only just».

«That's one small step for man, one leviathan leap for mankind. I was afraid I might be called away to Cape Kennedy. I have discovered a revolutionary method for walking in the moon's low gravity. It is marvellous news. How extraordinary you should arrive today...». It was 21 July and that morning the astronaut Neil Armstrong had stepped from the lunar module *Eagle* and walked on the surface of the moon.

Gala was wearing a Russian dress and her little black bow. She got up and left.

Dalí was on his feet and raced through the twilight like an electrical storm. The space suit shone in the dark. «You have made my little Olivona insane with jealousy. You must read her Tarot and tell her she can look forward to a long life and a new paramour with a colossal limousine. Today, you are t - oo beau - ti - ful». He pointed at the moon. «You arrive with history. It is a good omen. If I were not Divine I would have a luscious erection and serve it to you in a china bowl».

The guests were preciously chattering among themselves and he was saying all this for the benefit of a Spanish journalist named Antonio D. Olano whom I had mistaken at first glance for one of the Catalan ogres. It was a play. We knew our roles without rehearsal. When he said I was beautiful, and he said it often, it was merely a word from the script. We look into the mirror and find beauty one day, pain another. We never fully love ourself until we are in love. To Dalí, I was the treasured rejected object I had been as a child. Like Amanda Lear, I was there to attract, to scandalize, to cretinize. I was androgynous on the outside and confused on the inside. In Don Salvador I had found a teacher with teachings so subtle I was never sure if I were learning or losing something.

Dalí introduced Antonio Olano as the «Queen of Madrid» and the journalist looked at me like a surprised cat: «And who is this?», he demanded.

«*La Madre de Dios*», Dalí answered. The reporter now stared at me over one shoulder as his body shook like a little tree in the wind. We shook hands and Dalí rushed off to an antiquated

gramophone. «Come», he called.

He glanced down at the machine with a despairing look and I started the mechanism. The record was *Tristan und Isolde*. It sounded awful and he read my mind. «Listen, Violetera. Can't you hear? You must listen with your third eye...». He stabbed my forehead with a sharp finger and it hurt.

«Wagner», the Queen of Madrid said.

«Of course, of course, of course. But can't you hear what's in the background... It is delicious. Sizzling. Scintillating. It is the sound of sardines frying...».

The court laughed.

The Queen of Madrid had to return to Madrid and had found a pretty Dutch boy named Janice to take as a travelling companion. Some of the courtiers were dismissed. Others were chosen and we reconvened at *El Barroco*, a village restaurant disguised in the lush undergrowth around a low villa filled with gorgeous things. We were a gorgeous group: thin girls with pert breasts and velvet capes too hot for the summer; boys in silk and leather trousers, in cowboy boots; Dalí in a suit of tinfoil. The dress code was esoteric: if it was wrong it was right.

I sat beside the Divine and he told us how he had found a way to cure the problem of overcrowding in cemeteries. «We must fire all corpses into outer space where the rarefied atmosphere will mummify the remains and they can spin for a leisured eternity».

White wine appeared in silver buckets. Everyone asked for fish with names that were new to me. Dalí ordered spare ribs and a bottle of red wine he never touched. Gala had rejoined us and sat at the far end of the long table with the boy in boots. «He is the son of a Russian princess. She will have him tonight», he whispered. «She is insatiable. It is a marvellous quality».

The food came and restaurateur François Bessiere served Dalí's dish with a decorum worthy of the Last Supper. The Divine ate with his fingers as he talked about Apollo II, lobsters, the pre-historic creatures that had escaped the Ages of Ice at the bottom of the Indian ocean. Grease washed over his chin and dripped down his suit. He talked about excrement, putrefaction, onanism and coprophilia. «All children are intrigued by their own shit and want to eat it... How's your fish?», he said to the woman on his left and

she replied with an angelic smile.

«*C'est excellent!*».

«If shit could fly it would decorate the universe in constellations of new stars. *C'est colossal*. I must start my research tomorrow. Tonight. *Hay millones de arlequines*. I am the concentric eccentric. I am a shark», he told the woman, then he turned to me. «I swim between two varieties of water: the cold water of art and the warm water of science. I am the invisible line that separates the black from the white on a chessboard and it is here, in this realm of hyper sensitivity where, through the graces of the mad woman La Lidia, I located my paranoiac-critical method you must learn to understand if you are to understand Dalí».

I was breathless. Fatigued. My body danced at this time every night and dancing was like a drug that made you feel totally alive. The fish was delicious. Dalí spilled more food down his space suit and twirled his moustache as he made random introductions. There were two Ginestas (his name for pretty blondes) decorating the table; la contessa Marie-Claire de Montaignac, who was so happy she kept kissing everyone; Michel Peissel, her husband, tall and talking intensely about a lost Himalayan kingdom he planned to explore and did explore the following year; there was a Madonna in white ankle socks named Inés des Longchamps; Pico Harnden, a fabulous photographer, the son of the Russian Princess Missy Vassiltchikov; there was a San Sebastian (Dalí code for good looking boys of any persuasion) and two Guinnesses who lived at San Sebastian, the hermitage crouching on the hill over the village like a sleepy memory. They were the Hon. Jonathan and the Hon. Suzanna, now Lord and Lady Moyne, a mouth-watering couple, he in white like a Greek philosopher, she in the same rich shades as the bougainvillaea clinging to the restaurant walls. She was an English peach, rosy and fair and, like Dalí, had first come to Cadaqués as a child. La Suzanna was one of his favourites.

One balmy evening in the garden we were catching fireflies, holding them between our palms and studying the phosphorescent light like boys peering into a kaleidoscope. «They come from a far away planet only known to the alchemists». His face glowed and he told me a story:

Once upon a time, a young, handsome Canadian named Tim

Phillips arrived in Port Lligat with a letter of introduction from the Governor General of Ontario. He wanted to study painting with Dalí and Dalí duly sent him off to rent a studio, and taught him absolutely nothing.

One night, La Suzanna, Sue Lisney, as she was then, came to the house and met the Canadian. Now Dalí knew Sue loved the old hermitage of San Sebastian and considered her the ideal chatelaine. «Tim Phillips was perfect... tall and thin, from an impeccable background. I had to do something».

What the old alchemist did was mix a potion consisting of a pinch of *caca de gato* (excrement de cat), some ground rhinoceros horn and the pulverized remains of a firefly. He added the brew to their drinks. «They fell madly in love. He bought her the house. And they fell out of love. Pure magic».

«But she still owns the house?».

«Carlitos, of course. That's the magic».

Lady Moyne repaid the kindness some years later after visiting a night club in Barcelona's Barrio Gótico and seeing the act of a transvestite by the name of Peeki d'Oslo. After describing the performance to Dalí, he insisted they return. Like a star-struck fan he waited at the stage door with a bouquet. Peeki d'Oslo appeared and transformed herself into Amanda Lear.

The dinner party at the *Barroco* came to an end. «*Pas de café, pas de café, pas de café*», said Dalí, pointing at each person around the table and we rose, separating into the night. The chauffeur left with Gala and her prince and Dalí walked me through numerous bars and cafés. We passed Castor and Pollux and I was introduced to Ernst the Baron who undressed me with the look of primeval nobility. His grandmother had been the sister of the last Queen of Poland. The village was littered with lost aristocrats, some in masques, most real. Dalí adored people with titles and gathered them about him like a magician's cloak. «I am the greatest star fucker in the world», he said.

At the *Jardí de l'Hostal*, Man Ray was drinking with Richard Hamilton and the ghost of Marcel Duchamp. After spending twenty years in the village playing chess, Duchamp, the man André Breton had called the most intelligent individual of the twentieth century—and Dalí acknowledged as the second most intelligent— had just

died and I missed him with surreal nostalgia. Man Ray and the Papá of Pop Art were sitting by the piano where Henri-François Rey was playing with the extravagant movements of a mechanical toy. He jerked to a stop when he saw Dalí and informed him that only the Chinese and the Russians had a clear vision of the future.

«The planet belongs to them. It's the end for us, the end. All we have is the past, which can't teach us anything, and the present, which scares us».

«We have decadence», said Dalí.

«Decadence occurs when society becomes incapable of foreseeing its destiny».

«Decadence is the sister of genius».

The Frenchman nodded thoughtfully. «Did you read my book?», he asked.

«I am quoting it», said the Divine.

The novelist returned to his piano. Man Ray and Richard Hamilton stared into the bottom of their glasses. Someone took our photograph and as we left the bar Dalí stepped from the path into the back of the Cadillac. Arturo had returned. He fired the engine. A narrow section of the side window was down and Dalí was unable to lower it further. He spoke through the gap. «Come tomorrow. At ten. I will draw your navel». And he was gone.

## *The Rose*

It was very late. Stars filled the sky. Away from the plaza you could hear the sounds of the night: the sigh of the wind, the cicadas, the leaves fidgeting on the trees. The sea was grey and serrated like dragon skin, pulsating against the rocks with the slow rhythm of a heartbeat. I was bewitched. There was a purity. A vibration. I felt happy and forsaken. Connected and disconnected. It was a puzzle and the pieces were obscure. I wandered along the coastline and recognized the background to Dalí's paintings. He was everywhere: in my thoughts, my dreams, my excursions on the misty shores of purple haze. Cadaqués had an eerie, magnetic force. It was at the end of a long and winding road and being there was like being at the end of the world. It was so enclosed it made you look into yourself and what I saw were the iron bars of an inflexible fate, a feeling of domination and dread I was unable to overcome or master. Being with Dalí was like falling into a bottomless vacuum where ideas and images flashed by beyond grasp or interpretation. I was young and felt ancient, as ancient as my Indian blood. I had journeyed back from the New World to the Old World to be colonized by the Divine.

I wanted to move on but remained fastened by the obsession of repetition. His obsession. I felt as if my soul was being torn away and the pain was excruciating and delightful. I was fossilizing and reforming like a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis under the dubious rush of the Divine's hot breath. «You will never leave me», he said and though the future would take me to Afghanistan, to India and Nepal, I would hear his call and like the ocelot on its lead would snap back to the heels of the master. He was Marpa and I was Milarepa from the story of Tibet's great yogi. I was the *bardo* looking for a vacant womb in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. He was

the missionary and I was the guileless convert.

My thoughts led me back to Port Lligat where a cypress tree was growing through the hull of a landbound fishing boat. It made a wonderful bed with a quilt of starlight and I slept like the child departing from within. Dalí's mansion came with a million surprises and no guest rooms.

I bathed naked in the sea and Rosa watched from a window. She gave me a towel and led me to Dalí's bedroom. He was sitting up in bed dribbling coffee over a white nightshirt. He looked bewildered.

«What are you doing here? Who are you?». He paused to spill more coffee. «Where are we?».

«Port Lligat».

«Port Lligat?».

«I arrived yesterday».

«Where from?».

«Paris».

«Paris?». He scratched the side of his head. «I thought we were in Paris. We are in Port Lligat? It is a miracle. I am in my own bed. It is where I get my best ideas. Catalans like to spend the morning in bed. They are the cleverest most miserly people in the world and wherever they go all doors open for them. They will never want for anything and they will always find success. Francesc Pujols the philosopher made the observations in this book», he said and the book was there on the bedside table like a bible by the beds of believers. «Come. I must work. I work seventeen hours a day. I am a peasant».

He dressed in a cowboy shirt that had once belonged to Elvis Presley, baggy trousers and a necklace that consisted of a tongue protruding through salacious lips like the Rolling Stones motif but made years before for Dalí. It was his talisman while he painted.

We went to the studio, a seven-sided room where the skeletons of extinct animals clung to the walls and pots and tubes and blends of paint filled shelves lined with brushes and bibelots and the sad remains of the rose, the rose: a bare stem standing guard over a circle of fallen petals. Across the whole of one wall was an enormous painting called *Hallucinogenous Bullfighter* and it was the closest I had been to one of his works of art. I was so excited I



shivered. This was why Dalí was Dalí. Why the Divine was Divine. It was a masterpiece of anamorphosis, a portrayal of the matador Manolete composed of *trompe l'oeil* flies in a swarm around endless busts of the Venus de Milo, repeating and diminishing over the rocks of Port Lligat until they reach a cloudy portrait of Gala glancing down across the canvas at a small boy in a sailor's suit: Dalí, who, in turn, stares at the rose I had given him at Gare de Lyon in Paris. He used everything. The rose had been faithfully copied. It was exquisite. «The only difference between my paintings and a photograph is two million dollars», he said and the breath left my lungs in a long deflated sigh.

«It's phenomenal», I murmured.

«Look from here», he demanded and again poked my forehead.

«Ouch», I screamed.

He smiled a dry, capricious smile and then became pensive. «I must be careful, Violetera. I don't want to get wrinkles».

I was only wearing a towel which he removed. He studied me now with the eyes of a painter. They bulged and wriggled. «You would look sensational with breasts», he said and that was the Dalí ideal: the hermaphrodite, the boy with girlish limbs and severed penis: something outside classification, singular and abnormal. «I always wanted to be a beautiful woman but destiny made me Dalí».

I stood in the sharp light piercing the window and he hid behind an easel, peering out at me, fleeing back to cover. His eyes were wild and his hair uncombed. «Beau - ti - ful, Beau - ti - ful», he was saying and although his posture was pederastic it merely seemed part of the game. He delighted in giving me the impression he wanted me sexually and delighted more in others gathering this rumour to their imagination. It was an opera. «You are Violetera, the Virgin of Cadaqués», he said. «You are a boo - ter - fli - eeee...». And he shouted:

«A boo - ter - fli - eeeeeeeeeeeeeee».

I could hear the graphite scratching over the paper the morning was so still. The bay contained all the raw splendour one visualizes on rainy days in grey winter cities. The light had a translucence you only find on the Mediterranean and my eyes kept turning as if compelled by a charismatic force. «Don't move», he snarled and I was dismayed to find the tense beginnings of an erection,

something that never happened on stage.

«You are luxuriant, lush and fresh. You are Lozano. Our names whisper messages. I am Dalí and Dalí is Desire. Desire. I desire every - thing...». He pulled the drawing away from the easel with a flourish: «Come», he said and we stood by the window, his hand stroking the buttons of my spine and running over the curve of my bottom. He had drawn me with one breast and a telephone dial where the other breast may have been. My head and navel were shot through with square architectural holes. The lines of my arms and torso were bold, flawless, and between my legs he had reproduced the rose.

«I love roses», he said and his hand reached out to polish my unpredictable limousine. It became upright and demanding. «He is wearing a violet hat, *Violetera*». His skilful fingers briskly worked their magic and my seed scattered over the drawing leaving stains like contours on a mariner's map. «*C'est colossal*, Per - fect. We - will - send - it - to - Mister - Morse», he said and that is where the sketch now resides, with the *Hallucinogenous Bullfighter*, at the Morse Foundation in Florida.

«We should mail a card to Picasso. We must hurry...», and, like Gala, like Lorca, I was now a member of that little club who had joined with the Divine in the closest way in which two people can join and in a way that was never to be repeated.

We walked into the village with Arturo shadowing us in the car. Dalí carried a shepherd's crook with a curlicue top. He lunged at a barking dog and the dog followed us barking more. I chose a postcard picture of old Cadaqués from the rack outside a gift shop and Dalí dictated the message: «Picasso: In July neither women nor snails...». He signed it with an intrepid hand. «I send him the same missive every year. He never replies».

Henri-François Rey emerged from l'*Hostal* the inky-ringed eyes of one who had been there all night and fell on Dalí with fresh plans for organizing the universe. «Only women should be allowed to vote. Women and men under forty. They care. They have babies and they have a future. You and I, we are no more than cold sores on the face of humanity».

«There are those who believe that because they wear a black shirt and a red tie the Lord in his Heaven wears a black shirt and

red tie and are shocked and even pained to hear otherwise. They confuse habit with truth. Altruism is an affliction of the reality gland».

Henri-François Rey was wearing a black shirt and red tie. «How do you want to see our world being run?», he demanded.

«You should oversee the world in the same way that you would cook a small fish. This is Carlitos, the Virgin of Cadaqués», said Dalí.

«Have you read my book?», the Frenchman asked.

«No», I replied.

«You must come to my house. I'll give you a copy».

«Don't go, Violetera. He'll lead you into the dreary deeps of considered opinions».

«Señor, the man who never changes his opinion is like standing water and breeds reptiles of the mind», said Rey, quoting Blake.

«The road of success leads to the palace of wisdom», said Dalí, misquoting Blake.

Somebody waved.

«Don't wave back», Dalí said.

There was a boy sitting under a tree playing Bob Dylan songs on the guitar and I remembered that far away land San Francisco. A girl, shoeless and dressed like a harem dancer, floated by selling lavender bags. I bought two and gave one to Dalí... Madame Peissel appeared, tanned and beautiful, threw a coin in the busker's hat, kissed everyone, and wandered off not listening while Rey grumbled at her about an international conspiracy of capitalists and bankers.

At the *Bar Melitón* we stopped for fizzy water and whitebait we consumed to the clickety click of tourist cameras. «I love people. They are so ugly». He dropped a fish down his throat. «Never wave. Never complain, never explain and never apologise. Do you know who said that?».

«No».

«I did».

It was like a dream. Days with Dalí were the dreams of my lonely childhood. We played. Behind the house there was an olive grove that ascended in terraces to the cemetery... we were between life and death and meandered through enchanted gardens that were

secluded and marvellous. The camel shimmered in the sun like a mirage. He hid behind a tree and jumped out to say boo. We giggled together. He told dirty jokes that made me laugh although I never understood them or was able to recall those jokes for others.

I laughed and he tried not to laugh because of the wrinkles and then we lapsed into silence. Captain Moore materialized. He had papers to sign and took Dalí to one side to mumble secrets the Divine shared the moment he had gone. «Our names tell stories: Mr. Moore wants more. And more. And moore», he said and his eyes rolled.

We watched the little man hurry down the path in his blue blazer and he looked just like a dung beetle. «He is a kind, sincere and generous man. He is everything that he isn't: an English gentleman born in humble Ireland and a captain in an illustrious phantom army». He pointed at San Sebastian, the hermitage perched on the hill above. «He despises the English with a passion that is admirable and cautions me so regularly against the Guinnesses I invite them every day. Once he threw the ocelot at La Suzanna and knocked her cold. I had to revive her with my divine breath».

We stumbled on a giant reclining statue made from a fishing boat and lengths of broken pipe.

«It is *Christ of the Mackerels*», he said. «The arms are wrong». And we worked anew, adding shiny white stones with silver veins; knotty branches from deceased olive trees. «Look, I have found the skull from a cat. Have you noticed all the cats in Cadaqués? They round them up once a year. They are taken to the next town and gassed».

I was horrified and he was ecstatic.

«I love cats», he said. «I love to swing them by the tail as I did as a boy just to frighten my sister. Caligula would spend hours putting needles into the eyes of kittens to teach his daughter the pleasures of sadism. The Romans had the last great civilization. I am a descendent of Marcus Ulpius Trajanus and share the Emperor's superstition...». Trajanus would not cross a bridge made of wood in case it rocked and had all bridges on his march through Spain built of stone. They are still standing.

«Cristóbal Colón and Miguel de Cervantes both died in penury.

They are in my thoughts every day, every day. You must have a firm foundation. Never cross a bridge unless you know it is solid».

«*Bonjour*».

«*Bonjour*».

We were joined by a skinny attractive boy in the bloom of his pre-teenage years. His name was Peter Dunham and he possessed a unique distinction. He had strayed away at the age of two while his parents Guy and Monica were tethering their boat and, entering the labyrinth, he did or said something that so enthralled Dalí the Child Hater he bestowed on Peter the privilege of open access. He was the only soul alive welcome in Port Lligat without an invitation. «He is my undisclosed love child», Dalí whispered. «His father is an important lawyer. Don't tell or he'll sue».

«You are lucky to have found me here. I am expecting a call from Cape Kennedy. I am pioneering a unique way to walk in the moon's low gravity. How do I look?».

«*Guapo*», Peter replied.

We worked on the sculpture. Three boys. Dalí whistled.

Rosa appeared with a tray of lemonade and that night more guests appeared for the pink champagne Ambassador Mateo sent from Peralada. We dined at the *Barroco* and I abandoned my bed beneath the stars to rent the guest room above the restaurant. Another day passed. And another night. We had spent a lot of time laughing together. Playing together. I was so happy I had the continual urge to pinch myself. The last night in my room the sky outside was so clear I could see the twelve constellations of the Zodiac, the bright stars that made the horns on Taurus the Bull just as splendid as the Divine's moustache. I had found my father and slept like a baby in his celestial embrace.

I wandered through the morning streets. The cobbles on the hills were not flat and polished but set perpendicular to give the donkeys a footing. I passed under an arch and in the shade of a tree that remembered the Barbary Coast pirates old women in black were selling fish from baskets. Baron Ernst von Wedel was sitting alone at a bar called the Casino with a brandy for breakfast. He blew me a kiss. He knew long before me that we were going to be lovers. The little pouch of lavender made my leather bag smell heavenly. It

didn't matter that I had used the last of my money settling the bill for my room. I had left Paris with a one way ticket because it had not occurred to me to buy a return.

I walked up to the cemetery and down the hill to the house. Gala had been somewhere with Arturo and had just returned. She fired out her orders in Catalan and finished each sentence with «My Rat...». Bring the packages from the car «My Rat...». Take them to my room «My Rat...». Arturo flustered about looking more and more like a rat. «He was handsome once», Gala confided, and I imagined he must have been to have been included on the legendary list. Gala had slept with all the fishermen in Cadaqués, Dalí said. «She walked topless through the streets and scandalized the village. She has the most marvellous tits».

«He's inside», Gala added and I realized she only played the jealous wife because that was her role and she had a role in the drama the same as the rest of the court.

Dalí was reading about the moon landing in a scientific magazine. «I have been working since five», he said. «The measure of my success is the extreme of my labour. There are eight hundred artists roaming about Cadaqués searching for inspiration. When I was at the *El Morocco* in New York all the writers were telling me what they were going to write. I went away for six months and when I returned they were still talking about what they were going to write and I had spent those six months writing the greatest European novel since *Madame Bovary*. It is here».

He gave it to me. Inside, the fly leaf was decorated with an enormous signature. «You can judge people by the way they look after books. My gift contains the gift of genius. You must treat it with the utmost respect», he continued in a fatherly voice which I sensed was a screen for a rare affection that made me joyful and embarrassed.

I sat and smiled. «Don Salvador», I said. «I've run out of money. Can you lend me five thousand pesetas?».

There was a silence, brief and electric.

He began to shake and tremble. His moustache was quivering. His eyes rolled. I thought he was having a heart attack but then he leapt screaming to his feet. «They abuse me. They all abuse me. *Todo el mundo quiere darme por culo*. They want to bugger me. They

abuse me in every way. I am giving, giving, giving. I give by being Da - li... No one has helped me in my life, the whole of my life. I had to do everything myself. I have created my own luck and my own success. Look at Colón. Look at Cervantes. They were mad, mad...». His eyes were as big as saucers. «How dare you. How dare you. I am the master, the teacher. I am always giving». He paused to gasp for breath.

Once he said: «Large breasts are like old friends. You want to see them but not be bothered by them». He was following the precepts of his own paranoid-critical method. He had taken my paltry request and, through a paranoid association of unrelated details and obsessions, he was using the strawless bricks of an irrational logic to build a pyramid of Dalínian illusion. «No one is bound by the rules of reality», he maintained and every performance was a scene as preposterous as the scripts he had written with Luis Buñuel.

They had been students together at the University of Madrid. They were outlandish together. Together they wrote *Un Chien Andalou* and *L'Age D'Or*, the most famous surrealist movies of all time. They had both loved Lorca the poet and both had escaped from the Spanish Civil War, Dalí with Edward James as the first volley of rifle fire echoed over the land; Buñuel as the hands of the Fascist Falange reached for his throat. It was 1939. Lorca had been slaughtered in Granada and Buñuel fled to New York where Dalí, his friend and collaborator, had found space in the saddle of the American Dream. Buñuel asked him for a loan of \$50 and Dalí wrote a letter of refusal so singularly hysterical Juan Luis Buñuel, the film-maker's son, still keeps it in his wallet, a hex against avarice so potent he gave me a copy as a memorial to the Divine's allegorical greed. Juan Luis makes films like his father and also skeletal sculptures seen and sold in Cadaqués just the other day at a wonderful exhibition he shared with the Mexican painter Miguel Condé at the Galería Carlos Lozano.

We talked about Dalí. Even in death he remains at the hub of my life. All lines of communication are spokes on an eternal wheel. Everything is connected, overlaid, concentric circles that rise and fall like the terraces around Cadaqués. He is always there, the air I breathe, a void as dense as the empty spaces he painted and repeated, and curled in the depths of those empty spaces lived the

dragon of his extravagant ego. Dalí was not ungenerous. He was generous. When it suited him. His generosity was an expression of his narcissism and all overt requests, large or small, for money or guidance, met with a tidal wave of malevolence that was terrifying to see. He once gave a thousand pesetas to an aged beggar on the streets of Barcelona and I watched in horror as he proceeded to give the man a brutal kick.

His febrile eyes were as bright and shiny as the sequins on a harlequin's suit. Steam fumed from his ears. His moustache had never been more cheerful. He ran around the room wailing and screaming, a jeremiad that reached the stairwell and summoned Gala. She entered with a black look. «This terrible boy wants money», he said.

«It's only a loan», I explained. «I only want to borrow the train fare».

«I can't give to one without giving to everyone so it is best not to give to anyone at all», Dalí told Gala and she looked like his mother. She shook her head and took a good grip on her expanding hips, always wider than Dalí painted.

She turned and shouted for the maid and the maid appeared with Gala's snakeskin handbag. Gala gave me five thousand pesetas, less than Buñuel had asked for in 1939, and wagged her finger like a frenzied metronome. «Here», she said and there was a note of irony in her voice. «Take it. You must travel third class».

«Yes. Third class», Dalí confirmed. He was very excited by this. He took her hand and kissed it. I had never seen them so happy. «Third class», he said again. He waved his arms through the air. «Third cl - a - ss...». He began to dance around the room and I was stunned by his agility. «Third cl - a - ss... Th - i - rd cl - a - ssssss...».

Arturo drove me to the station and I read *Hidden Faces* on the train. Dalí's novel was about exotic aristocrats with long titles and it reminded me of all the people I had met in Cadaqués. He called that night. «I feel very comfortable sitting on Mijanou's red cushions. You must go and thank her for sending them. How was the journey?».

«Divine».



«Divine? In third class?».

«There is no third class...».

«No third class? This is scandalous. An outrage. I must call General Franco immediately». And he hung up.

## *Let The Sun Shine In*

For all of us who enter life without inherited privilege, we need either the gift of genius or one precious moment of luck: a coincidence, a connection —a break. If opportunity doesn't come knocking, you have to go out and hunt it down.

That was what Mamá decided to do. She assembled our clothes and my story books, packed them with her sparkle in the leather trunk and I left Barranquilla not knowing I would never return.

We moved first to Venezuela where a strange and mysterious thing happened: I acquired a new suit of clothes, new shoes and a step-father I couldn't help liking. Jose-Maria Zorilla was a charmer, a gambler, a cheerful Spaniard with ideas for making a fortune in America and urgent business that took him back to Spain immediately after the wedding ceremony.

We waved goodbye. Mamá and I then boarded a boat, like the boats I had watched steaming in and out of the port where my grandfather had been an official, and we voyaged north to New York. We travelled cabin class: not with the men in white suits sipping cocktails as the sun went down; nor the rag people with their carpetbags and cheap wine for the fiestas that went on noisily all through the night. We were among the quiet and timorous, people too modest for cocktails and too bashful to sing drunken songs of the dusty villages they had left behind. We were middle-class and, as Dalí said, one should never be middle-class about anything.

We sat mutely in a cabin Noah may have designed for two stowaways and I stared out through a porthole made from the bottom of a wine bottle. The Caribbean, a shiny mirror of silver and green, vanished into a grey sultry carpet and nothing appeared in that small window until from out of the mist I saw a woman

bearing a torch as she strode into the waves. «The Statue of Liberty», Mamá whispered in English. My education had begun. I was nine, lean and spindly like a newborn pony with legs of rubber as we stepped ashore.

New York was different. It had a different smell: the smell of sweat and luxury, the sweat of all those millions of men working the seventeen hours a day Dalí said he worked to join those opportunity-kissed few carelessly gazing from their limousines at a personal vision: billboards reaching a hand to heaven; the neon flashing promises over an arid grid of apartment blocks; the click of stilettoes echoing in offices typing tracts for the American Dream; yellow cabs with Cuban drivers plotting the overthrow of Batista. It was terrifying. Too hot and too cold. Too rich and too poor. It was a movie and I played the ignominious role of a schoolboy at a school where everyone spoke English except me, a tall, tanned fish in a savage pool of sharks and shysters.

Mamá seemed almost contented waiting for Señor Zorilla to appear, which he did periodically with new plans and empty pockets. Mamá was patient. She unpacked her trunk and found a job reading children's stories on a Spanish radio show. Her name told a story. It was Tesoro: Treasure; buried treasure waiting for someone with eyes that could see her sparkle. She nurtured dreams of becoming an actress but lacked the *je ne sais quoi* for anything more than a nebulous eccentricity. The brash working women of Manhattan were wearing two piece suits and strings of imitation pearls Mamá never ventured to imitate. She wore Spanish clothes and walked gracefully on the balls of her feet like a performer in operetta. She had a clear melodious voice and one day my real father heard her voice on the radio and some brief hour of happiness a decade old must have touched his mind with a moment of melancholy. We are all prone to feelings of despair when we look back upon times of happiness. Past sorrows evoke merely the dull throb of an abiding astonishment. They had met in New York. He had been a rich student, she a poor one, and with common roots back in Barranquilla he left her with a souvenir, the son he had never seen and was now intrigued to see as a criminal they say is fascinated by the scene of the crime.

It was a bitter day with frost scribbled over the sidewalk and it

must have been Saturday because there was no school and no ritual outing to hear mass at St Patrick's although we took the same bus. We walked the last few blocks to the *St Regis Hotel* on Fifth Avenue and Dalí would doubtless have been there and perhaps we passed in the wood-lined lobby full of smoke and laughter. As I entered the revolving door one way he could have been going out the other and he would have made me trip by pushing harder. He loathed nine year old boys. Except Peter Dunham.

It was an elegant hotel crowded with confident people. «Be good», Mamá said and I was always good.

The old-fashioned elevator deposited us on one of the upper floors.

My heart beat faster. I was colouring mental pictures of life rebuilding itself in some place where Mamá's sealed silent lips curved in the new moon of *joie de vivre*. She looked so pretty that day, so exotic among the pale thin women of New York.

She knocked and the door was opened by a man wearing a dark suit and polished shoes. He was tall, as slender as a tango dancer, and spoke in whispers. «Tesoro», he said. «My little Tesoro...». And in his eyes I imagined there was great love but the imagination is merely a monkey commanding an elephant without the fetish of paranoia-critica.

«This is Carlos», she said formally and then she turned to me. «Say hello to your father».

I had crossed to the far window. He looked at me as you would look at your own red eyes in the morning mirror and then I did something that returns often to my thoughts: I ran across the room and threw my arms around Carlos Consuegra and hugged him just like all the little boys I had read about in my story books. «Papá, Papá», I said and he wriggled away as you would disentangle yourself from the disorderly advances of a friend's new puppy.

«I have a gift for you», he said as he brushed non-existent creases from his dark suit. He gave me a coat with a fur collar. And I never saw him again.

I remembered that coat when Dalí arrived back in Paris the following spring wearing a coat with the identical fur collar. «¿Cómo estoy?», he said as I walked into room 108.

«Fabuloso. Muy guapo».

«It is my Mafioso coat. It is good for business. Amanda hates it». Suddenly, his distended eyes doubled in size and he lifted his Sarah Bernhardt cane as if to prepare himself against a mugging. «What are you doing here? Have you been thrown out of *Hair*? Why aren't you in Paris?».

«We are in Paris».

«Impossible. Impossible. Where's the Captain? Call the police».

We had been through this scene before although this time I had the odd feeling he wanted me to protect him from me. «Don Salvador, we're in Paris», I insisted.

«But it is October, Violetera. I am always in New York in October».

«No, no. It's April».

«April?», he roared.

«Look at the trees. They're full of new leaves».

He glanced out at the chestnut trees placidly shading the room pale green and his eyes filled with wonder. «It is April», he said. «April. I have gained six months. It is a miracle. I make my finest shits at the *Meurice*, royal shits I study in blissful euphoria. Come, we must tell Gala. I am so happy».

Gala was missing from the suite and missing from the lobby. We went out to look for her in Place Vendôme, walking at great speed until we reached Van Cleef & Arpels where he stopped and began beating the window with his cane. «Ten thousand francs... eight thousand five hundred francs... twelve thousand francs...». It was Bonwit Teller relived. He continued to shout out the prices of the rings and necklaces, drumming a tattoo until the manager appeared at the centre of a circle of bewildered assistants, his anger evaporating when he saw it was Dalí.

«I have the most marvellous wife. She never asks for jewellery. Never. She never asks for jewellery nor clothes. I say *mon chérie*, what do you want? And she says: Dalí, give me a little painting».

The small crowd swooned and the Divine lifted his cane like a general about to lead a cavalry charge. «We are waiting, always waiting for a glimpse of something we cannot imagine and when we see it we are unable to understand it. Nothing is new except arrangement», he cried and then he turned to me. «Did you read my novel?», he asked as he often asked and I nodded. «It is excellent,

excellent. It is a rare gem. It is a book that will last a hundred years. You know what Goethe said: Everything has been thought of before. The problem is to think of it again».

And we wandered off without sparing a second glance for the customers and staff at Van Cleef & Arpels. He gave me his coat to carry. Streaks of white patterned the pale blue sky like Wedgwood china. We saw a couple wearing straw hats ride by on a tandem. «Olé!» he called. «Olé», they responded. A man with a hare-lip was having an argument with himself. Dalí's eyes popped. «*C'est colossal*», he said and I wondered why I didn't see these things when he was absent from Paris.

By the time we reached the Alfonso suite, the first guests were arriving for the Princes' and Paupers' Tea. People were carrying lilies-of-the-valley in bouquets as a gift to mark the approach of May Day and the Captain emerged from the elevator with two giant vases, one under each arm, and both his ocelots straining in different directions. «Heel Babou. Heel Bouba». The ocelots kept pulling and the giant vases were trembling and Dalí stood there and treated himself to a rare chuckle. I went to help.

«No, no, no, no, no», he said. «*El Capitán* is a very capable man».

«... the interview?», implored a hopeless voice.

«One o'clock Tuesday», Dalí replied.

«... we shall call it Dalí Delicious», wailed the dauntless individual still trying to promote Dalí-flavoured ice cream, and we skirted a table laden with canapés to shake hands with a man with a fierce handsome face and long hair. «Geronimo», Dalí said. «He is going to turn my play into a musical. This is Violetera, the Outraged Virgin».

And he was gone, chasing after Gala who was chasing around the room opening all the windows in defiance of her fear of draughts. «That smell», she yelled and if looks could kill I would have died like a flower just as Dalí was always proposing. «I hate that smell». Dalí caught her and, like a small dog, or a small boy, began to rub himself against her side in a display that thrilled everyone.

I had made a *faux pas* not first greeting Gala and her hysterics with the windows would not be the end of it.

«I'll be seeing the show tonight. I'm real excited. I've never seen it in French», said Geronimo with an East Coast accent. He then had to explain that he was Gerome Ragni, the originator of Hair, and I was amazed he was a hippie and so young, amazed and ashamed that I had spent the winter pining for Dalí's return when I should have been taking dance classes, diction classes, singing classes.

The room was filling. Louis XIV had arrived with Prince Dado and the Prince's newest concubine, a girl all in yellow who looked no more than twelve. One of the Twins accompanied the wine waiter who resembled Hitler. Edward James was slumped over in a chair like a ventriloquist's dummy that had just been abandoned by Bigoudi, who was standing alone staring out the window. Amanda Lear was scrupulously studying her surroundings as she chatted with Donyale Luna, a black model wearing contact lenses that made her eyes orange, the first person I had ever seen with such a ploy and it was wonderful. She was wonderful, they were both wonderful, both tall and thin, Amanda in black, Donyale in white, two sleek sails of *yin* and *yang* afloat in a *samsara* of journalists and admirers.

I watched them in the mirrors embroidered on Gerome's Moroccan waistcoat. He was smoking marijuana and as he sucked the smoke into his lungs his features became as sharp as a tomahawk. He passed me the joint and introduced Sugary Goodness, a dimpled Californian with that extra layer of creamy soft flesh the Lord with arbitrary generosity lavishes on American girls. She had tanned playful breasts peeking from the crocheted bikini top she wore with a wrap-around Hawaiian skirt. «He's fab», she said, gazing at Dalí busily kissing the King's hand. «... so cute, so...».

There was a little black hole in the conversation. «How do you like Paris?», I asked and the girl's blue eyes filled with all the wisdom of *Fodor's* guide.

«Far out. I mean, so cute, so, you know... We went to the Louvre and Notre Dame, wow. We took a ride in one of those horse things, you know, like they have in Central Park, and then we walked up the Champs Élysées... stopping to sample the wine and soft cheese at the famous bar I can't remember what it's called, real cute...».

«I will see you at one o'clock Tuesday», I heard Dalí say

impatiently.

«Far out», said Gerome as Gala appeared with malevolence glinting in her glossy black eyes. Dalí had stopped talking and, as if this were a cue, a silence descended like a fall of morning snow. There was a pause, a delay just long enough for me to meditate on what was coming: a surrealist act that was going to require a surrealist response.

Gala took my glass and, as she began to tip the contents down my shirt, I calmly took Gerome Ragni's glass, wet my fingers and dabbed some champagne behind my ears. «Delicious», I said. «We should all let the sun shine in...», and the pink champagne formed a pool around my boots with the moons and stars.

«Wow...».

«Patchouli oil», Gala hissed.

Donyale Luna screamed, Amanda smiled a smile of serious happiness and a photographer fell from a chair. A woman who must have been somebody's wife had dropped something and I don't know what and, as she bent to retrieve it, a man she may or may not have known kicked her up the arse! She turned and the man and the men he was with obviously began talking. The twelve year old girl was sucking the hem of her yellow skirt and Dalí raised his walking stick in triumph. I had cast myself into a pit of murky despair when the New Year brought the Sixties to an end but it dawned on me at that moment that the Sixties were going to continue and eclipse the coming decade. I took my shirt off as Dalí approached with his lecture on the human skeleton.

«Wow!».

The Twin stopped with an enlivened Edward James in tow and emptied a drink down his throat. «This is Castor», Dalí told Geronimo, ignoring Sir Edward, and John (or Dennis) studied the crochet work displayed by his girlfriend. «Don't mind if I'm rude next time we meet. I have a brother».

«I am going to have a sex change», Sir Edward announced. «I've decided to become a man».

A brunette with great legs elbowed the Englishman out of the way. «About that interview, Mr. D...».

«Sharp at one. Tuesday».

«When's Tuesday?», said the Twin in a puzzled tone.



Dalí blew his nose into a large plaid handkerchief and examined the result with satisfaction. He turned to Sugary Goodness. «Pleasure penetrates your eyes and leaves through your sex. Would you like to come to my room and watch me masturbate?», he inquired and she responded with panache.

«Cute», she said.

## *Gala*

When I arrived I ignored Dalí and the Russian party. I went straight to Gala and kissed the back of her hand. «*Bonjour, Madame*».

«You will sit beside me», she said. «It is time you learned my language».

I had eluded the cup of poison. I was part of the family. I was there like an office cat to be abused and cherished. Dalí chose the court, but Gala was Lady Macbeth with a temperament just as barbarous. For reasons now apocryphal she once spat in the face of an hotel receptionist in New York, and I remember with undiminished horror once watching as she stubbed out a cigarette on the back of her companion's hand at dinner. «He was boring me to death», she said in justification and Dalí was ecstatic. They were a double act. He was the protagonist. She the antagonist. «My métier is to play the bee and sting», she would say and for more than five decades she never failed in her function.

If in Dalí I imagined I had found a father, I never for a moment thought that in Gala there was a surrogate mother. She refused to see her own daughter Cécile, and never forgave her for selling some Dalí paintings in Paris during the war. «What a bitch», Gala said whenever she thought about this insolent deed, forgetting that while Cécile lived in dire poverty and constant fear of the Germans—and in fear that she may have been Jewish; as her mother may have been Jewish - Gala had spent the war years safely in the United States where Dalí wrote his novel, worked with Alfred Hitchcock in Hollywood and laid the foundations for his fortune.

Gala was unique. A monster. An extraterrestrial. She was from another place and another century. Dalí played the madman but his madness was personalized. Gala wasn't playing. She was truly mad, a chromosome away from howling clinical dementia, and this

created a self-possession that, being greater than Dalí's, raised her to a platform where she was impressed by no one, respectful of no one and where the feelings and opinions of others bothered her no more than flies on the face of a marble statue.

At one of the frequent luncheons at the *Hotel Duran* in Figueres she was once placed beside Alfonso, the Duque de Cádiz. He was there with his new bride Carmen, the grand-daughter of Franco; the dictator's passage by osmosis into the bloodline of Spanish monarchy. The Duke was dashing, youthful and handsome. Gala was then about seventy-five and sat there like Minnie Mouse in her Coco Chanel bow. She was fluttering her eye-lashes.

«Are you coming to Paris soon?», she inquired, easing a withering thigh against the Duke's thigh.

«Yes, in the spring», he replied.

«Good. You must come and visit me. We stay at the *Meurice*. Do you know the hotel?».

«Yes, very well. I used to visit my grandfather there».

«Your grandfather! What was he doing at the *Meurice*?».

«Well, he lived there».

«Lived there! Why?», She was outraged.

The Duke was a trifle disconcerted; unusual for a duke. «He was in exile», he explained.

«In exile! Where from?».

«From Spain».

«Spain! Spain! I don't understand...».

«My grandfather was King Alfonso».

«He was?». She paused, blinked and continued. «That's good. So you know the suite. You can visit me when Dalí is off with one of his whores».

Carmen was sitting at Dalí's side. He was engaged at the time like a court artist to paint her portrait. «I will mix an extra pinch of vermilion when I colour your cheeks», he told her.

Dalí could have found any number of beautiful women or boys to replace Gala but beauty tires and the muse is elusive. Gala was his lucky charm; his icon. «She's the only one who protects me», he would say and from what no one understood.

On the Good Ship Surrealism, Gala had been the carved and erotic figurehead, that icy promiscuous fusion of liberation and

desire that awakens in man the juices of original thought and creativity. She had been boyishly attractive with chestnut hair, Slavic cheekbones and delicate features concealing her wanton nature. Her eyes were agate magnets, sullen and mysterious. They could pierce walls Paul Eluard wrote and when she married her French poet she demanded complete freedom of sexual expression which he granted, even encouraged. Some said she devised new formulae for group sex and everyone just loved to gossip about the ménage à trois that embraced her poet and the painter Max Ernst, a liaison that traumatized Ernst's wife and so traumatized his son Jimmy poor Jimmy still sits staring sadly out to sea from his inherited house on Long Island. All the Surrealists had fleeting affairs with Gala. When one of them did a particularly good piece of work the others would remark: Ah, well, he was in love with Gala at the time.

She arrived in Cadaqués in the summer of 1929 with Eluard and their daughter. René Magritte and his intricately boring wife Georgette were staying at a village fonda with the art dealer Camille Goemans and, to complete the unlikely gathering, Luis Buñuel turned up with a new film script Dalí ignored. Buñuel grew to hate Gala, just as the village women grew to hate Gala, and the village men said they hated Gala. To augment this circle of mutual loathing, Gala was initially revolted by Dalí and his absurd behaviour. He dressed for her in artful rags with one breast showing and his body covered in goat's dung. He cried like a child and then had a laughing fit that lasted so long she thought he was going to die of laughter.

Gala's first impressions softened. Like the village witch Mad Lidia, she began to appreciate the subtlety of Dalí's genius and saw in his work the golden cage and mink clad walls of her own security. It is the female of the species that chooses, nurtures, builds dynasties. They spent private moments together on the rocks around Cadaqués and she whispered words so curious they captured the young painter's heart: «I want you to kill me», she said and Dalí had found his muse. Paul Eluard returned to Paris with Cécile and his wife remained forever.

Dalí prized Gala's avarice, her strength of purpose, her dark, enigmatic moods, her dramatic dark eyes that terrified me and most

others. Once, when Jean Levy was visiting Port Lligat, while Dalí and Julien Levy, his first New York dealer, sat in one room talking, Jean sat in another with Gala and for more than an hour not a word left Gala's lips. «She just stared at me with eyes like a pair of nails». She was intimidating and this Dalí adored. He adored her temper, her vindictiveness, her sudden and irrational animosities, her violence. He revered the voracity of her sexual appetite and, while detesting physical contact himself, he saw in Gala's emancipation the dynamic route to the subconscious he was exploring for the images that crowded his best work, the canvases he painted during those early years with Gala. Freud was busily telling everyone all neuroses stemmed from man's inability to live in a natural state and the Surrealists believed the natural state was free love and open sex, a vision we took to our hearts thirty years later at the Dawning of the Age of Aquarius, as Jerome Ragni wrote for *Hair*.

Gala's passions were luxury, young men with beautiful bodies and money. I never once saw her show interest in politics or philosophical discussion. The night the Russian party appeared at the *Hôtel Meurice* was no exception.

Mstislav Rostropovich, the dissident cellist and composer, had just fled into exile with his wife, the opera singer Galina Vishnevskaya. They had been invited to dinner with a group of their supporters. A company of Chinese shadow dancers were also in town and they were performing behind a screen. Dalí watched with intense concentration while he treated his guests to the largesse of his nomadic mind.

Gala sat with me on one side and the composer on the other, chatting in Russian and French. Her *modus operandus* was to be eternally irritated by something, but that night was one of those remarkable occasions when she was in a good mood and deigned to make it apparent. Dalí had found a delectable Canadian girl named Monique O. who sat telling the Divine about all the members of the British Royal Family she counted among her closest friends. «Charles is just darling».

«I am going to teach you a lesson in Marxism that will enable me to describe the definition of a banker and it is this...», Dalí said, interrupting and pausing for effect. «A banker is a man who gives you an umbrella when it isn't raining and takes it away when it is. I

told Groucho this and he told the world».

Monique was no match for the Maestro. «The slave prefers his master to freedom», he went on. «You must know the story of Stalin and the chicken», he said and he glanced down with disgust at the chicken Kiev languishing on Monique's plate. «Stalin took a live chicken into a meeting of the Politburo and, in front of his colleagues, proceeded to pluck its feathers. When he had completed the job he had watched in his grandmother's kitchen as a boy, he placed the bloody and terrified creature on the ground? And did it flee? No, no, no, no, no. It clung to Stalin's trouser leg for protection. That, he told the Politburo, is how we must treat the Russian people».

Monique giggled.

«I don't understand. Explain, please», Madame Rostropovich said in French and Gala told the story in Russian, pulling the same expressions and waving her arms like Dalí. She only needed a moustache. «Women never understand anything», she said to me in Spanish. «They think it is coy to play the cretin».

«I adore the shadows, they are so long. They are an enigma. They make me think of William Tell. Carlitos, you must dance for us», said Dalí.

The Chinese dancers were bowing from the waist and the guests were clapping and eating and when the tinny wheezing music began again I performed a sequence from *Hair*. «It is just like being at home», Madame Rostropovich declared and then she sang an aria from some obscure opera only known by Dalí. As the applause waned, the Divine began one of his favourite discourses. «You can analyse a personality through a solitary pubic hair», he said slowly in French and Gala translated. «The entire DNA is coded in each and every pubic hair. The anus has the most marvellous pleats, each perfect, like the rings on a tree, and through these pleats you can read the past and the future. *C'est colossal. Hay millones de arlequines*», he said just for the taste of the words and he said it often and it meant there are millions of harlequins or harlequins have millions, and the confusion showed so vividly in the eyes of the new émigrés perhaps they were tempted to hurry back to Moscow but perhaps not.

It was very late. Monique was staying only a few blocks from the

*Hôtel Meurice* but the Divine had offered to escort her home and asked me to join them so he would not have to face the return journey without company. Giant egos hate to be alone even for a moment. We strolled through the columned arcade where shops sold postcards and plastic Eiffel Towers that shone in the dark. «I adore arches. They have a grace that is soothing. You must look at de Chirico's work. People discover in his paintings a symmetric novelty you will find in the cartilaginous vertebrae of the sardine».

A river boat hooted, a mournful cloak of sound in the still air. Monique's heels clicked on the sidewalk. When we turned the corner she pointed to her apartment on the third floor. She crossed the street and entered the building. We stayed where we were, waiting. Dalí was staring intently up at the window and we both stared until at last the shutters opened. Monique turned away and the light was extinguished. Then, an elegant bottom appeared pressed against the glass. «Angel's wings», murmured Dalí appreciatively and we walked back to the hotel.

The French chauffeur came for me at twelve-thirty and I was still half asleep. I had watched the sunrise over the Seine with the actor Rufus Collins and a folk singer named Donovan who talked about Dylan and despised him with the intensity of a Dalinian fetish.

The car returned to the hotel to collect Dalí who was standing in the lobby with Daniel, a photographer, a pretty San Sebastian with short flaxen hair and a fly glued to his cheek. They were the epicentre of a swarm of thirty or more members of the international press corps.

«... an exclusive interview...».

«I'm from *Time*. From *Time*».

«Mein editorr vill be very disturb...».

«Mener quelqu'un en bateau...».

A tall journalist with looks borrowed from Peter O'Toole felled the American from *Time* and stepped through the mob. «It's one o'clock, perhaps you'd like to come to my room. It's all arranged...».

«Adorable», said Dalí, edging his way out of the circle, his eyebrows raised in two perfect chevrons.

«But you promised», said the brunette with lovely legs.

«He promised me first», Peter O'Toole told her.

«Fuck this», said somebody else.

«Fok Yu Too», said the Red Guard.

«You must speak to my *homme d'affaires*», sang Dalí with arms hopelessly extended. «That which promises most produces least».

«It's impolite...».

«Genius is seldom polite. To be great is to be misunderstood. Leonardo was persecuted by the Church for his outrageous claim that the earth orbited the sun. What is axiomatic today becomes heresy tomorrow. Today's dreams are yesterday's lunch. Tomorrow's breakfast is today's illusion. It is only the primitive who lacks a sense of humour», and he stepped out of the hotel into the car with Daniel and me holding the rear. «I am going to take you to the Musée Gustave Moreau», he announced and it was like being with a father playing the Wizard of Oz. The paparazzi gave chase.

We sat in the back. I got out at traffic lights to give a tuberoses to an old woman crossing the street and she almost fainted seeing a tall Indian with waist long hair in a limousine with Salvador Dalí. She screamed.

«Rape, rape», Dalí screamed back.

And we arrived at the museum still laughing and horrified to find it was Tuesday and the museum closed at one o'clock Tuesdays. The porter was an old man with the smell of pork sausages on his breath and an important medal on his chest which Dalí admired.

«I am Dalí», he then said and the porter looked cautiously over his shoulder as he opened the door and let us in.

«This is a wonderful museum. A marvellous example of how a museum should not be», he said. «My museum will be a theatre of the magical and absurd, an arena of mystery and madness. It will be a temple to the genius of Dalí the Catalan. Look...». We had stopped at the *Young Thracian Girl Carrying the Head of Orpheus* and she was the image of the little hippie who had given her virginity to Dalí.

I gasped. Then Dalí gasped. He stood back. «Extraordinary. I don't believe it. San Sebastian...», he screamed at Daniel, waving his stick at a painting entitled *The Fairy and the Griffins*. «It is Carlitos. Carlitos. My God. Take your clothes off, quickly, quickly. I can't believe my own eyes...», and I did as he asked, as I always did as he asked. I posed like the Fairy in Moreau's canvas and Daniel



took photographs and the old war hero stood in the background with a story he would tell his friends over the café table and they would nod and see the first signs of senile dementia.

I posed beside *Hesiod and the Muses*; then *The Unicorns*. Dalí told us Moreau was one of the great masters of the mid-nineteenth century. «He wanted to bugger his mother and had to suffice with little boys», he said. «Look...», and he showed us how Moreau's representations were a mirror to his repressed homosexuality. The portraits were of handsome men and nubile boys in settings more Romantic than Classical. «Delacroix was his inspiration until he discovered Carpaccio and Bellini. Look at the confidence he displays in his brushwork, look at the colour of that flesh. We live in the age of bourgeois decadence. What have we achieved since the Greek epoch? What do we have now? Abstract art», he said and I thought he was going to spit. «It means nothing. The abstract painters are monsters. They all end up killing themselves. Jackson Pollack, Arshile Gorky; they all commit suicide. They all want to be Velázquez and hate themselves because they are impotent».

The chaos was eternal, never random. My eyes were opening and being opened. After our visit to the museum at the rue de La Rochefoucauld, the future unfurled a path through every museum and gallery in Paris, Madrid and Barcelona. He had just acquired the Figueres theatre firebombed in the Spanish Civil War and, while he was assimilating ideas for the *Teatro Museo*, he provided me with the education I would need to open an art gallery where I, in turn, could serve his summer needs for a constant and changing supply of the young and malleable. I read the Tarot cards but Dalí could see the future.

The ancient porter carried my clothes and we wandered on. Dalí told us Moreau was the teacher of Matisse and that he had a small but significant influence on the Surrealists.

«He was driven by genius and sexual confusion. He wanted to be a woman», he said and Dalí was talking about himself, as Dalí had been pursuing a moment of self-analysis when he condemned the abstractionists as pale shades of Velázquez. It was Dalí who wanted to be Velázquez. He had stolen his moustache. He wore a wig of his curls. He had the eyes. But not the hand. His small paintings had

been executed with a draughtsmanship he was unable to repeat on a large scale. He yearned for a place among the old masters and when, at an early age, he came to realize he lacked that intangible something, he vindicated his artifice by claiming his desire was merely to amuse and cretinize. Dalí abandoned all serious attempts to paint the expansive canvases he admired and despised himself for employing a prosaic subterfuge: he projected drawings and even photographs on to canvas and, adjusting the size with a mechanism anathema to his public persona, he plotted the scale with a pencil. It was by this method that he created *Tuna Fishing*, a painting sold to Paul Ricard for \$280,000 after the liqueur connoisseur sailed into Cadaqués with the intention of purchasing a pair of water colours.

We moved on and there beside the curving staircase lit by the leaded windows was Amanda Lear as one of the *Angels of Sodom*. «This is my favourite», he said. «The tragedy of the travesty is that she cannot have an orgasm».

And that was the bond, the special relationship Dalí had with Amanda, with Pandora and Potassa, three boy-girls he cherished and whose company he craved, even while he was surrounded by the world's most erudite and refined. He was a genius, but a genius cannot be a genius all the time and the court was there to colour the background. The overtly normal infuriated Dalí. He idolized the ambiguously glamorous. He hated to touch or be touched by women. Transsexuals were the ideal escort, attractive boys were next best.

The girls were as outrageous as they were dissimilar. Potassa was from Puerto Rico, voluptuous and vulgar in that South American way. Pandora was ethereal, tall like a stork, as fine as a flower, as nervous as a bird. She spoke like a bird. When she first met Dalí in New York she only made bird noises and he responded with bird noises and this private conversation went on whistling and chirping from Dalí's eyrie at the top of the *St Regis* until Pandora arrived in Cadaqués to visit the Divine when he stood at death's door and, knock though she did, he never let her in.

Pandora was part of the Andy Warhol ménage and had made movies with Candy Darling and Ultra Violet. She starred in *Luminous Procureess*, a film we saw in Barcelona with the director Stephen Arnaud. «Was your intention to be erotic or

pornographic?», Dalí asked as we had all wanted to ask.

«Well...», said the director.

«Bok, bok, bok, bok, bok...», said Pandora.

Pandora married lots of rich men. «My garage cost \$300,000», she told me in starry-eyed amazement, without a trace of vanity. She was authentic, uncalculating and though Dalí adored Pandora, Amanda was his personal work of art. He financed the final snip that, like the signature at the bottom of his paintings, made Amanda his masterpiece. She was part Oriental, part French, part English and all Amanda: A-MAN-da... LEAR, the lion... beautiful and blonde with high cheek bones and slender legs: the woman every woman wants to be and every man wants to protect and violate.

There are certain basic but crucial ingredients needed to make a beautiful woman: hip bones that jut out in such a way that a bikini bottom looks indecent. She requires a keyboard of ribs below small, high rounded breasts mounted by pink nipples that peek up at the sky not down at the earth. Her thighs must not touch when her knees and ankles do. Her innocent eyes are set wide apart; hollowed cheeks; an interesting nose and lips that smile, pout, droop and seem ravenous for oral sex.

Amanda was all these things. She was a drag queen; a homely girl in a JC Penny sweater; a singer à la Marlene Dietrich; an uproar in a wrap made from the pelt of a Bengali tiger, five-inch heels, scarlet lips and make-up inspected for consummate perfection with the aid of a Polaroid. She was, at various times, the girlfriend of David Bowie, Iggy Pop and Brian Jones. She married the Marquis Malagnac d'Argens and, when we had dinner together after Dalí's inauguration into the Académie Française, I inquired how the noble lady was enjoying her husband and she said she was thinking of giving him the sack. The Marquis was famous for losing fortunes.

Dalí and Gala have won their wings but those who loved and feared them keep the flame burning and Amanda, as Dalí's opus, is more than any of us the living breathing proof of the artist's brilliance. Amanda has duende. She is special as most transsexuals are special. If they work the streets or they marry rich men and make movies like Pandora, they are always extraordinary. They are always artistic. They go into show business. They paint. They write.

They can do anything. Except have an orgasm. They are unable to function as men, and when they leap into the abyss where the cold currents like a cold blade reshapes them into what the Maker had intended, but mismanaged, they emerge from the shadows with lights that shine in the gloomy tedium like safe harbours in the dark ocean of the bourgeoisie.

In two decades, I only once saw Amanda stuck for words. We were in the garden at Port Lligat. «What did you pay for that husband? He's not worth more than ten thousand dollars», Gala said and Amanda turned a delicious shade of pink.

Gala was over eighty. Her mind like her skin was a web of wrinkles but there was still a sharp edge to her tongue.

## *Film People*

«Margaret tells the filthiest jokes», said Sir Edward. «Smokes like a chimney. Drinks like a storm drain. HM's incensed».

«You know who you remind me of», the King of Siam said to Amanda. «Betty. She makes the best pasta. We were over at her new place last week...».

«The Prince has the biggest limousine in Europe», Dalí told Kirk but Kirk was too busy and much too famous to shift his attention from Amanda's dark parts. She smiled, shivering like a very surprised and very beautiful cat as Kirk's arm vanished under the table.

«They tell me you're a painter», he said without interest.

«She is a very bad painter», Dalí informed him. «Women cannot paint. They cannot write. They cannot compose. They make embryos. To paint you must have genius. Genius is only found in the balls and Amanda has lost them». He brought his hands together as if in them he held two bricks.

«What was that?».

«All creativity is in the balls. Do women have balls?», he asked Léonor Fini and she responded by making the sign of the cross in the way you would make the sign of the cross to a vampire. «Paint is about time, space and balls. Am I right, Sir Edward?».

Before Edward James could respond, the King of Siam replied for him. «You're right», he boomed.

«What sign are you?». Dado asked him and the King of Siam stared at the Prince with a look of absolute amazement. «My sign? My sign? I have no sign. I am Yul Brynner».

«He is a comb manufacturer», said Dalí and Edward James fell forward into his soup roaring like an underwater monster.

Kirk was sucking his finger and Amanda was moving in her seat

like an electric eel. «Great pasta», he said in sudden accord. «But Betty's isn't as good as Sophia's. She told me she owes her whole life to spaghetti...».

«All Italians owe their lives to spaghetti», said Dado.

«Betty who?», asked Sir Edward, wiping his chin.

A brief silence marked the moment of humiliation. «Lauren Bacall», said Kirk Douglas and Yul Brynner with common distaste, and Dalí had clearly had enough of hearing other people's voices.

«Those who make judgments are fleeing the present to reside in the past where the deed being judged was committed. They assess you for what you were then, not what you are now».

«Genius in the balls is a judgment», said Léonor Fini, opening her arms and looking superb in sorcerer's robes sewed with magic symbols. When her work was on show in Paris for the first time, the Surrealists made an appointment to meet her and she appeared dressed as a Cardinal. She liked the idea of wearing the clothes of a man who would never know a woman's body. She was an amazing person, as shocking as Dalí, a lesbian, like his sister, which he admired in the painter and loathed in Ana María. Léonor's face was made-up in clown's white powder that split like cracking ice as she came to her feet. «Genius», she screamed, «... is in the slit».

«I agree», said Madame Brynner and I was surprised to discover there was a Madame Brynner. The way Monsieur Brynner had been behaving at the *Meurice* that afternoon I felt fortunate to be sitting at the Gare de Lyon with a grasp on my dignity. Dalí had booked a table at the station's cordon bleu restaurant before he left with great fanfare for the summer. The film people were in Paris signing contracts and were due to arrive in Cadaqués in August. The setting had been chosen as the background for *The Light at the Edge of the World*, a movie adapted from the Jules Verne novel and produced by Alexander Salkind.

There were more than twenty people at the long table and we were playing what Dali called the Game of Snobs, throwing out half truths and petit distortions like colourful butterflies with markings that identified our real or assumed progenitors. Everyone was talking at the same time. It all seemed so very exotic, so vogue, and my only disappointment was that Kirk Douglas was a foot shorter in life than on the cinema screen. All the Europeans were finding a

baron or two, or at least a Pope on the family tree, while the Americans were reaching back further to incarnations as Egyptian princesses and Roman centurions. Yul Brynner, toying with the gold medallion on his chest as if it were an heirloom, told us he was part gypsy and part Russian nobility and Dalí was delighted. The more important everyone imagined they were the more fascinated he behaved. He was wearing his astonished look and leaned closer to the actor as if to impart a confidence: «My wife is a relative of the Tsar, the double of Anastasia», he said, and Gala glanced up with the inanimate scowl of a voodoo mask. She was trying to get her claws into the tall Etonian named Nicholas Tuffnel and sat at the opposite end of the table, combed and rouged as if by a taxidermist.

Dalí dipped his fingers in the soup and twirled his moustache. «Mademoiselle La Fini is the most talented female painter in the world», he announced. «But talent isn't genius. I know a man who makes clay pots in Paris. They are charming. He is a craftsman. Not a genius. The abstract expressionists show us fields of meaningless colour and say: this is art. It is not art. They are not artists. They are not craftsmen. They are businessmen contemplating suicide».

«In the slit», cried Léonor Fini once again.

«Who is that woman?», Yul Brynner whispered.

«Léonor Fini», I replied.

He shrugged. «She can sit on my face whenever she wants...».

She fluttered the wings of her cape like a magnificent bird about to fly across the table. «Slit», she hissed.

Dalí dismissed the interruption and moved his attention to Louis XIV, who readily displayed her Bourbon chin. He told the gathering a new version of the occasion when the Ambassador kissed my hand, and then pointed out Amanda's likeness to Moses! They were his usual routines, but new to the Americans. They were enjoying themselves. Yul Brynner had been wandering around the suite all afternoon not knowing whether to try and seduce me or Donyale Luna who, for some reason never disclosed, had been lying on a bed of fresh fish. Kirk Douglas had arrived too late for the tea time festivities, but felt duly compensated in the belief that he had discovered the most exciting girl in Europe and, in spite of all hints and allusions, had no idea that Amanda was not how Amanda seemed. They were happy. Dalí was happy. Dalí made me happy

and this was his genius. He was excessively cultured and slightly ridiculous wearing his various medals and pins, a sprig of blossom behind his ear. He was an entertainer, a magician, the fool with words of wisdom. I laughed at Dalí's outrageous declarations and later often found myself running them through my mind and uncovering tiny jewels sparkling among the garbage.

«So what's your philosophy?», Kirk Douglas asked and Dalí glared back at him.

«Cannibalism and putrescence», he answered. «Philosophy is a journey across an endless sea, a voyage of myriad routes all leading from nowhere to nothing».

«I believe in peace and love», I said and he wagged a warning finger.

«It is a delusion, Carlitos. Love is a beautiful tapestry woven by two people and the moment it is complete they keep going until they unpick every thread».

«You are a cynic», said Yul Brynner.

«No, I am a cyclist».

«A psychiatrist?».

«An anarchist. I am the sublime hedonist in the septic bedlam. I am Divine. I was named Salvador because I was born to save art from the despotic hands of the suicides».

The main course appeared. «Delicious», said Madame Brynner before tasting anything.

«It is considered bad manners to comment on the food, even favourably», Gala told her and the woman blushed.

Dalí had been so amusing at the Restaurant Gare de Lyon, when the actors and film crew turned up in the summer accompanied by Jean-Claude Drouot, Fernando Rey and Samantha Eggar they were anticipating further performances that were not forthcoming.

The reason for his reluctance was a simple paradox: he was aware that the narcissism that made movie stars what they were left little tolerance for ennui or repetition and, cheerfully reproaching them for all the vain characteristics he valued in himself, he decided they were unworthy of receiving fresh revelations of his genius. «It is not easy to keep playing Dalí», he said and we watched from the distance as they built a cardboard lighthouse in Cap de Creus just like the stone lighthouse that was already there.



Every day there were fresh marvels: a sailing ship like the ships from my childhood in Barranquilla caught fire; the bar keeper's son ran away with the first assistant director; Alexander Salkind's wife, Roberta Dominguez, a Mexican Indian, appeared with a story she had written for Dalí and Picasso and which was made twenty years later with Peter O'Toole and Omar Sharif.

«You have a face that betrays the sadness and sensitivity of our people», she told me. «You'd make the ideal Montezuma».

Kirk Douglas stayed opposite Baron Ernst von Wedel in what was to become Jean Levy's house and strutted through the village like Spartacus. Yul Brynner looked like the king from *The King and I* with his shirt off, and the samurai hero of *The Magnificent Seven* with it on. The local people were in heaven and those who did not get parts as extras simply loathed all those who did.

Samantha Eggar was staying at the Port Lligat Hotel on the same floor where I had a room. One night, I heard a faint knock and, opening the door, she entered in a very revealing negligé. «I couldn't sleep. It's the silence», she said. «Do you have anything to drink?».

«Only water».

«Water!». She wandered around the room and then dropped down on to the bed with a sigh. «Water», she repeated.

«I have some pot», I said and her face lit up.

The negligé had yawned open and she had marvellous breasts she was happy for me to admire. I sat on the bed and rolled a joint. «It's so quiet it drives me crazy». I was intrigued to know what the film star wanted and almost immediately I found out. «I've heard so much about Dalí. I'd do anything to meet him», she said. We smoked. The window was a dark square lanced through with starlight. The sea was licking at the rocks around Port Lligat like a tongue and the moon was a shaft of limitless possibility.

It was the beginning of what was to become my career as Dalí's procurer. In the morning, I went to the studio where he was working on a large canvas with Isidor Bea, his assistant. Bea did all the tedious, background work and the master added the details. «A canvas needs only one touch from the hand of the Divine and it is sufficient to make it a Dalí», he explained.

He made me tell him everything that had happened with Samantha Eggar, then told me to bring her to the house at five that afternoon. He was waiting behind the stuffed bear and led us through to the egg room. «Is it true that American women do not fart?», he asked and Samantha Eggar grinned.

«I love to fart», she replied. «But only in private».

«No, no, no, no, no. It is something chère amie Salamander you should share. I am writing a book on farts. It is a Catholic pastime despised by Protestants. I have documentary evidence that Popes are selected by the Archbishops for their ability to fart. When the Pope stands at that little balcony in the Vatican and raises his hand to the crowds in St Peter's Square, what he is doing at that moment is letting go with an enormous fart».

She laughed.

«There was once a female Pope and do you know how she was discovered? She was a bad farter. Everyone knew and they had to burn her at the stake. Farting is the male preserve, just as making embryos is the role of the female».

«I see».

«There is so much to see. And to smell. There used to be a famous brothel in Venice where the whores ate perfumed food prepared by an alchemist. Their speciality was farting in the faces of their clients. The gentlemen could choose different fragrances. *C'est colossal!*».

There was a large book on the table and inside there were photographs of a baby being born! I was shocked. There was also a copy of Dalí's legendary play which he gave Samantha and she read the obscene text while he squirmed in his chair like a Baptist in ecstasy. The tragedy in three acts, which he carried locked in a trunk on his cyclic wanderings, was about a beautiful princess in love with both a despot and a priest. It contained long passionate soliloquies on Dalí's habitual preoccupations: autoerotism, sodomy and coprophilia. «My tongue yearns for the taste of his pure white seed. I crave only to fill myself full with his angry sword. My body is a pit of desire. Bring me his feces on a silver platter. Warm me and heal me with your golden rain...». He had gone through the same ritual with Isabelle Adjani, Catherine Deneuve, Brigitte Bardot and others, but it was Samantha Eggar who won the Academy

Award for appreciating the Divine's sense of humour.

Rosa appeared with a bottle of French champagne, not pink champagne from Peralada. It was a sign. We drank and giggled. Dalí was disarming, charming, roguish, brilliant. He talked about flies and masturbation. «In Arabia the man being buggered has broken the laws of Mahomet, while the buggerer has not. It is curious. I believe only women should be buggered. They have openings designed for being pierced. Jack Kennedy's greatest pleasure was his trips Around the World... you haven't had a woman, he told me, until you've had her in the mouth, in that place where they make embryos, and up the arse...». He pantomimed the positions for us. «It is the masculine rite of passage», he continued. «He was more than a politician, poor dear, he was a true artist». He poured more champagne and left the room for a moment to call for another bottle.

«He's amazing», Samantha said. Her eyes were bright; on her lips was a little smile, wonder and disbelief. He'd got her!

We went on a tour of the house, something women always adored. He showed Samantha his rhinoceros horn and talked about aphrodisiacs. Then, he produced all his phalluses and pornographic photographs. «Did you know Walt Disney? He was a very good friend of mine; he visited me here. How marvellous that the man who made all those cartoons for children was a pederast! He had the largest collection of erotic pictures in the world».

We came to the room with the glass floor. The entrance was shaped like a vagina with bulging plastic lips that seemed to suck you into the warm interior. Inside, spread out like a strange snake, was a red tube about ten feet long. It was made of canvas with a skeleton of thin metal hoops, each with a diameter no bigger than the width of my shoulders. The sun was setting, the room shadowy. «Sex turns on the light. When you have an orgasm, the light shines and your soul merges with the universe».

We were lulled by Dalí's voice, drugged by his obsessions. «Salamander. It is a wonderful name, a mythical creature. Take your clothes off. You can take part in an important experiment». He looked at Samantha Eggar and he looked at the red tube and his eyes rolled and I was amazed that she did as he asked without hesitation. She had an exquisite body blessed by the Cadaqués sun

and wasn't at all shy, as I had discovered in my hotel room. «You must crawl through the tube very slowly and when you get to the other end go even slower», he said and she entered the red snake, bending over and wriggling beautifully.

It was a prolonged process and she emerged bathed in sweat and smiling like an angel. She went through again and again and each time Dalí grew more excited and the actress more abandoned. «You are a baby born from Dalí's uterus. You are my love child». He was rubbing his hand up and down his walking cane but his limousine stayed in the garage. I began to wonder what my own role was going to be and as the thought entered my mind Dalí intercepted it. «Now it is your turn, Violetera», he said and he pulled at my shirt.

I undressed and eased my way into the snake. It was harder for me, being larger than Samantha, and I emerged almost suffocated. Dalí laughed and she laughed and then he told us to sit on the floor. «I need some angel's wings. I must have them. I'm desperate», he said.

We sat and he vanished to the room below where he took photographs of our remote parts pressed against the glass. Samantha covered her face and giggled. So did I. It was very funny.

That night the Divine took the film people to *El Barroco* for dinner.

## *Lobster In Chocolate Sauce*

We sat gazing out to sea as if the bay of Port Lligat were the eye of a microscope and he focused on all the events of the day before. He revelled in gossip and scandal. He wanted to know who was sleeping with whom and how much everyone had in the bank. If it were old money he wanted to know how old, and if it were new, he wanted to know how it was acquired. «I am going to give Mr Douglas a small drawing but nobody else», he said and I could hear the Machiavellian wheels turning in his mind. «He has the sensitivity of a true art buyer».

We watched a cat stretching in the fading sun. «Throw a stone at it and make it go away».

«No, let's leave it in peace», I replied.

«You are a sweet boy, Carlitos. Yul Brynner has fallen in love with you», he said. «Jean-Claude Drouot is in love with both the Twins and Kirk Douglas is in love with himself. That chin. *C'est colossal*. He never stopped staring at himself in the mirror. I adored all those stories about his sons».

And it wasn't true. Of course. «People who talk about their children should have their tongues cut out», he once said.

Dalí was not a good listener but he did listen and at the first opportunity he would plunge in with a related but better, more amazing, more amusing tale. He was a terrible boaster, a master exaggerator. His anecdotes grew from lore to legend.

His first journey to New York had become an enterprise as elaborate as Jason's voyage on the *Argos*. He had recounted Ambassador Mateo's *faux pas* when he kissed my hand a hundred, perhaps a thousand times, switching the location, magnifying his shock, the diplomat's embarrassment and my response, even suggesting the wine maker wanted to leave his wife to live with me;

even suggesting my desire to consummate the madness. Dalí borrowed quotes and jokes, plagiarized ideas and reinvented everything.

«I am a liar who always tells the truth», he declared without a word of thanks to Jean Cocteau. He bragged about the role he had played in the lives of numerous Hollywood stars and his alchemical talents as a matchmaker. «It was me who married Mia Farrow to Frank Sinatra and I arranged it because they were totally unsuited and the task was impossible».

I had a feeling he was thinking about Samantha Eggar and we both turned at the same moment. His eyes rolled and wriggled. «I knew the instant she walked in she wanted to take her clothes off. I can always tell. She has the most marvellous arse. You only have to look into a woman's arse to know exactly what she is thinking», he said. It was an unexpected gift, Carlitos. You must bring me more gifts. I love gifts and you never bring enough.'

Each casual comment had been carefully considered and, without knowing how it happened, or when it began, a great deal of my time was consumed in finding novel ways to amuse Dalí. He had entered my subconscious like an insect in a piece of fruit and, while I appeared to be healthily and succulently myself, I was secretly feeding the Divine.

He was calmly bending sheets of tinfoil into miniature statues, turning, twisting, making money like a good Catalan. He hated to waste time. I had read to him while he worked with Isidor Bea during the morning, a task normally performed by Gala, who was in Greece with a new lover.

Before lunch, we had taken a walk around the house so he could inspect all the doors. He had asked the fishermen to use them to clean their brushes when they painted their boats and adored the constantly changing images that appeared. He called the results «Accidents in Art», borrowing from Duchamp's «Ready-mades», but adding the Dalínian fetish for repetition. He secretly admired, even envied Duchamp, whose ideas were always original and who, two years after his death, was being acclaimed by many in the art world as the greatest innovator of the century.

Duchamp had exhibited a urinal at an art show in New York in 1917, the display posing enigmatic questions about the meaning of

art which disturbed the critics as much as the public. He canned the Paris air, a concept copied commercially, and cross-dressed on occasions as a woman. He put a moustache on a print of the Mona Lisa and added the letters L.H.O.O.Q.: *Elle a chaud au cul*, an obscene pun, at least in 1920. Dalí had told me at the Louvre that Leonardo da Vinci's painting was renowned because it represented the Mother symbol and I know he was always irritated that it was Marcel Duchamp, not he, who had thought of drawing Mother with a moustache. Dalí had courted wealth and fame, while Duchamp turned his back on both. In the 1920s, an American dealer offered Duchamp \$10,000 a year to supply just one piece of his work. He was living in an apartment without a stick of furniture and was teaching French to earn a living. The sum offered was a fortune, but the Frenchman coolly turned it down. «Duchamp called dealers the lice of the head of the art world», Dalí said with a mixture of awe and bewilderment.

Unlike Duchamp, who made an artistic statement once and moved on, Dalí had a compulsive need to go over everything. Like his scribble sketches, enlarging the shapes with countless lines until Don Quixote on a horse appeared, or a snail, or a little boy in a sailor's suit. When he gave them to people they thought they were getting an original, but it was always a copy of a copy of endless copies. He did these drawings in seconds like a signature and they were always very effective. Everything he did was effective, and he knew what effect it would have on others. He had a shrewd almost satanic understanding of human nature and had been born with the ability to manipulate it to his advantage. He had arrived in New York the first time wearing a loaf of bread on his head. The second time he smashed a plate glass window at a department store and was arrested. He knew publicity was as precious as talent and was aware in the 1930s that making a success as an artist meant making a success in the United States. Selling a painter, more than any product, requires ceaseless, skilful promotion, something Dalí perceived intuitively and employed with a sophistication the admen on Madison Avenue discovered twenty years later. «My secretary brings me the press clippings once a week. I measure them and weigh them. I never read them».

Rosa materialized from the shadows with two cups of hot chocolate

and a plate of *fruits déguisés*. He ate voraciously, talking and spraying crumbs over his cowboy shirt. The sea was calm, shining like a mirror. Off to our right, the terraces climbed in steps of vines and olives like cobwebs against the setting sun. The twilight made the dark rocks seem darker and the house and the white strips around the fishing boats became brighter.

«We are sitting in the most easterly point in the country», he said. «When I awake I am the first person in Spain to see the sunrise. Even before the General».

The sea slowly changed colour: orange, red, then a shade of mauve Dalí said you could capture with a speck of indigo blue. The nightingales awoke singing, and he mimicked their song. One bird came back night after night and he christened it Saint Francis of Assisi. «Look, Saint Francis is here. He has come to protect me». He always felt the need to be protected. They were the last words he ever said to me.

He had rested his hand on my leg and we sat there for a long time in silence. It was at moments like these that I felt we were so close we had become family and before I knew what was happening I began talking about my real family, my step-father, the suitcase full of money, the crocodile tears. Dalí was unusually quiet and stared into the dark hills while I journeyed back to Venezuela, to the tailor's shop in Caracas still clearly in my memory.

It was an elegant shop where men in striped trousers and black jackets measured me, pinched my cheeks and sent me out with a little suit, a bow tie and a pair of black patent shoes. I had my hair cut and, the next day, Mamá married José María Zorilla, the brother of a famous judge in Algeciras, he said, raising his eye-brows and opening his lips to reveal a parade ground of gleaming gold teeth. He wore a watch chain across his waistcoat, a neatly clipped moustache and curly black hair swept back in waves like the folds of a silk fan. His great-great-great-grandfather had been a playwright during the Golden Age of Spanish literature, he said, and he promised Mamá a golden age before he waved goodbye from the deck of a liner bound for Spain.

The marriage lasted three years and in that time my step-Papá's visits were rare and spectacular. He was a nice man, as gamblers are. Sometimes he arrived laden with trinkets. At others, he wore a



defeated expression that would soon brighten behind his ready smile. A pessimist is just a well informed optimist Dalí said, borrowing the line, and Señor Zorilla was so cheerful he must have been ill-informed.

It was shortly after he returned to Spain that Mamá and I sailed to New York and Mamá began reading stories on the radio. It seemed rather glamorous but it was not well paid and Mamá only liked the job because it was as close as she would ever come to show business. My step-Papá would appear, take us out to a restaurant, then disappear again. Sometimes, he gave Mamá gold ear-rings or a gold chain. «Only buy gold», he would explain. «It's the easiest thing to resell». He would tell us about the important deal he was arranging, a contract that involved the export of trucks from the United States to Spain, Spanish agricultural equipment to Venezuela and, when he did not arrive bearing gifts, he needed money to tide him over until the deal was finalized.

While Mamá was working and giving Señor Zorilla money, we were living modestly in two rooms that were so small we were forever having to move one thing to get to another. There was an enormous radio in a bakelite case that stood on the table. When the wings of the table were opened it was impossible to get through the door to the kitchen. When I did my homework, the radio had to be moved to the trunk and, when I went to bed, the table would be pushed under the sagging springs. My step-Papá's luggage was stored under the narrow bed he occasionally shared with Mamá and Mamá, being one of those polishing, fussing women, was always taking everything out, dusting it, cleaning it and putting it back again.

One day, she became intrigued, as people do, with a small suitcase that was locked and bound in leather straps. It was dark brown and very heavy; very inviting. She undid the straps, hesitated for a moment, then forced the lock with a screwdriver. The case was full of money: pesos, pesetas, dollars in all denominations, and \$30,000 in travellers' cheques. Mamá's sad face became even sadder. She put the case back where she had found it and, the next time José María returned from a business trip, she presented him with his money and told him she was leaving.

He began to weep. «Don't leave me. I need you. It's our stake»,

he wailed. «We are going to be rich».

But Mamá did not want to be rich. She was not materially motivated. Like me. José María wept and she stood there with her hands flat on her breast like a Madonna painted on the mud walls of a South American church.

«They are only crocodile tears», she said and it was the strongest image I recall from my childhood. I had never heard the saying before. People did not say it in Colombia. She had translated the words from English to Spanish and the phrase was wonderful.

*Solamente lágrimas de cocodrilo.*

I imagined a crocodile with big sorrowful tears on its cheeks and the quarrel that ensued washed over me and I just remember sitting on the train the next day with Mamá and my sister Mary thinking about crocodile tears while Mary cried. She was less than a year old and she cried all the time.

Mamá had been looking for an excuse to leave. I realize that now. We had been in New York for three years and she was tired of reading stories on the radio. She was tired of her prodigal husband and to escape she was taking us to the one place in the world I did not want to go: Los Angeles, where my mother's sister was happily married to my father's brother.

It was a Latin American morality play: the tale of two poor girls who meet the two rich boys from across the tracks and who, at the first vital crossroad, take paths that lead them in opposite directions. While my melancholic mother had been giving into the charms of my father in New York, her carefree sister had been at home in Barranquilla resisting the charms of my father's brother. Carlos Consuegra never married Mamá. But Aurelio Consuegra did marry Aunt Elvira and they were living in a big house in the nicest part of Los Angeles.

Like her own mother, Mamá had a strong sense of Catholic retribution and saw her brief detour from the chaste path as being perpetually punished. She had mistaken the morality play for real life and, to punish herself further, she found Señor Zorilla, married him, had a baby, and deserted him for the bitter comforts of her sister's house. I grew up believing all relationships ended in failure. Had Dalí not said love is a tapestry the lovers carefully unpick?

He was completely absorbed. The shadows were lengthening,

the colours dissolving into darkness. He had never been so silent so long and just sat there, his hand still stroking my leg. It was soothing. Memories are such miserable things. I would learn in India to live solely in the present. The past is a black hole filled with icy draughts, a recurring nightmare where I see myself as a little boy watching the boats steam out of the harbour in Barranquilla, leaving me behind. I had always felt as if I had done something wrong, a feeling so deeply ingrained it tarnished every part of my childhood. I knew I was unwanted. I needed love, a father figure and, by the time I was twelve, I had lost two fathers and gained an uncle who was marvellously tailored, very dignified, a magnificent horseman with an inherent abhorrence for bastard nephews.

We stayed in his house for almost a year and I was the most obedient boy in California. I made my own breakfast so as not to annoy the maid. I went to school in a yellow bus and sat at the back reading books. I had learned English like a little parrot. I got better and eventually became so good at spelling I won a prize and had to go up on the stage in front of the whole school to receive it. The prize was a certificate and a gladioli seed in a box. I planted the seed secretly in the garden and was delirious with joy when it grew and flowered.

I met Gabriel García Márquez at an art gallery in Barcelona in 1982, the year he won the Nobel Prize for Literature, and he knew by my accent I was from Colombia. «Not that it's important. Life is a mountain and while you are climbing you should never look back. It doesn't matter where you are from, or where you are going. Only who you are», he said and I had an uncontrollable urge to tell him about my childhood, the gladioli seed and the certificate with my name printed in bold letters. He listened carefully, his large, lugubrious face broke into a smile and in the web of lines that moved over his features I saw the map of our common past.

«Those little prizes are the hooks we need to pull us up the mountain», he said and I felt awfully proud that Colombia had produced such a genius.

Mamá took no interest in my modest achievement. She worked. She just worked. She had not accomplished her private ambition to

become an actress because she had been too timid to try. We moved into a small apartment just like the small apartment we had left in New York and she supported us as a seamstress. She even employed other South American girls as assistants. She had drive. She was organized. Industrious. But success needs that extra special touch, that little indefinable something she did not have, few people have, and if a sprinkling of that little something had been bequeathed to me it came from Aunt Elvira. She would visit, as she had visited years before when we all lived in Barranquilla, with a book for me, a toy for my sister and a smile Mamá invariably managed to erase.

Like Mamá, I worked hard. I graduated from High School and got a place in City College. I knew that to get ahead in the United States I would have to acquire an education. I was the very soul of conformity and dreamed of one day becoming something marvellous like a history teacher. It was the immigrant children and children of workers who wanted to leave school as soon as they could. They hated being told what to do. They wanted to be basketball stars or movie actors, but never understood that all success begins with work and patience. It was a cycle; a syndrome. They were on a treadmill like caged mice and were unable to get off. I would see people I knew a year after they had quit school and already they would be mean and hostile. They aged; they aged so quickly. It was horrifying. They took to drink and drugs and petty crime. They despised authority and saw their failure as the fault of prejudice, the government, the system.

I avoided the people from the past and found a job as the mail boy in a brokerage company. Then, for higher wages, I moved to a plastics factory where I was manacled to a machine from four until midnight. I watched the melting plastic travel through a tube into a iron mould. I pulled a handle, a bell would ring, a door would open and things would pop out: door knobs, hooks, studs and plugs, little things that fitted on bigger things. My hands grew callused and my hands grow clammy now just thinking about it. It was like a confused dream. A fantasy world. Something surreal and haunting. Hot gusts of steam rose like tortured wraiths and clung to the asbestos ceiling. We stood like altar boys in the cathedral of commerce at the feet of oily iron masters, massaging and soothing, stroking a handle, watching a dial. They were our idols, our icons,

and demanded our complete attention for eight hours of every day. It was unspeakable. Remembering parts of the past is like opening an old scar and poking about with unclean fingers.

I remained employed at the plastics factory for a year. I was moved to the night shift: midnight till eight... and then I went straight on to college. It was killing me. I knew I was doomed without a degree and could not help but envy all those boys and girls with a mother and father who paid their fees, and bought them cars when they passed their exams, and bought them cars when they didn't pass their exams, so they didn't become resentful.

Sometimes, I remembered the suitcase full of cash, and wondered what happened to José María Zorilla.

I let my hair grow for a part I had in a play at college and I liked it long, although my mother hated it. I had always been too tall and too thin. Now, I liked being tall. And I liked being thin. In Colombia I had never felt fully Indian or fully European. In America, I wasn't quite an American, or quite like the illegal immigrants who had arrived dripping wet on the shores of the Rio Grande. I lacked the machismo for that.

I became aware that people with a good education were also more sophisticated; the more sophisticated, the more cultured, more refined. My friend Vivienne Waugh, a spur of the English family of *littérateurs*, once accused me of respecting only old Etonians, the old rich, the aristocracy. It is not entirely true, but not so surprising! People with the right background make invisible connections; they recognize something in each other and form a club outsiders can never penetrate. The first time I went to the *Old World*, the best restaurant on Sunset Boulevard, I wasn't even sure how to use a knife and fork properly. I was mixing with actors and dancers, gay older men who were worldly and affluent. I saw another life.

Spring arrived and, with my savings, I had a sudden urge to take a deep breath and plunge into life. I said goodbye to my mother. I kissed her and I kissed my sister. She was seven and awfully pretty. I loved her so much. «*Adiós, hijo mío, adiós*», Mamá said and I took the bus to San Francisco. That was where things were happening.

The hippie movement united people. Everyone was growing their hair. Like me. I took dots of lysergic acid diethylamide smuggled out from the university campuses on sheets of blotting

paper and the buildings all over the city seemed to melt like the soft watches in *The Persistence of Memory*. My body tingled. My fingers were bitten by pins and needles. I saw a tree growing chickens' eggs in psychedelic colours and I spent an hour eating a single grain of rice. It was delicious. I was hallucinating but it was healthy, controlled. It was a good trip. I went on many trips with LSD and they were all good trips. Drugs can change a person and I needed to change. I had always been too shy, too eager to please, a conformist like Mamá. The chemicals chased through my mind and I saw a picture of all that I could be. I was a painting by numbers meeting a brush and a palette of paints. The spiral codes of my DNA unravelled and rewound with a brand new message. I had been trapped in the hard shell of a chrysalis and in San Francisco I grew wings and became a butterfly. Dalí loved the image. Of course, he loved saying the word *boooooo - ta - fli - eeeeeeeeeeeeeeee* and it made him smile when he heard it, in spite of the wrinkles.

The sun had vanished behind the hills. We stood. «Never trust anyone with a Z in their name», he said and we walked back through the garden to the house.

That night the cook prepared the Divine's speciality: lobster in chocolate sauce, and I watched as Fausto Pujols, son of the philosopher, Francesc Pujols, pretended to enjoy it. «Your father's prediction that Catalans could go anywhere and would always find success has come true in Dalí», Dalí told him, glancing at the dish in the centre of the table. «Serve our guest, please, Violetera», he added. I had been Carlitos all day but Violetera was, as he put it, my *nom de guerre*.

Dalí was making plans for organizing the interior of the *Teatro Museo* and found no difficulty in persuading Fausto Pujols to donate his father's desk and writing materials for the museum's study. «The lobster in chocolate sauce has never failed me!»,

## *The Exorcism Of Grasshoppers*

I slept in Gala's private chamber, the hut, as she called it, a room leading into another room furnished with souvenirs and forgotten costumes, bottles of rejuvenating cream, and rows of lipsticks reflecting in a convex mirror that distorted everything. There was a dressing table with side mirrors that enabled her to see the bow on the back of her head and, when I looked into the glass, it was Gala's black eyes that stared out at me. It was terrifying. No one stayed in Gala's boudoir. We had broken a strict rule and it lit Dalí's face with mischief.

«I won't tell», he promised, turning to leave, and one had to remember he was a liar who always told the truth.

On the wardrobe there was a faded photograph of the Dalís with the Duke and Duchess of Windsor; it was remarkable how similar the two women appeared. The musty smell of the old wafted from the bed and, when I climbed between Gala's silk sheets, it was like being in somebody else's shoes. The pounding of my heart sounded like footsteps and I waited for Dalí to return but he never did.

I could hear the sea moving softly in the starry night and in my dreams I saw myself dancing with an erection like the erection the Divine had nurtured the first time he drew my portrait, only now I was at the *Theatre Porte Saint Martin* being chased from the stage. There is always a message in our dreams, whispers from the subconscious. I had been in *Hair* for more than a year and was wondering if there was more to life.

I woke early and took a shower. «Without separate bathrooms a couple can never be truly elegant», Dalí had told me.

I joined him in his room and he gave me one of his enraged looks.

«What are you doing here? You should be working. I have been

lying here since five making plans. Where are the eggs? What have you done with the paint? Have you gone mad?». He was in a very good mood.

«Pass my trousers. You can sniff the crotch. The fragrance is sublime». He kissed his fingers and put the trousers on under a white smock. He fitted his Velázquez wig over his thinning hair and topped it off with a *bérétina*, a long red Catalan beret. «Like a great chef, the master painter must officiate in appropriate headgear». I do not recall ever having seen Dalí take a bath, although he did swim every day in the summer.

He grabbed his curlicue walking stick and I followed him at a sprint to the kitchen where the table was stacked with boxes of chickens' eggs. Rosa and Paquita, the cook, were removing stray feathers, polishing the eggs and putting them back in their boxes. «We need a bucket, Rosita», he said and she hurried off on her plump legs to the storeroom.

When all the eggs were ready, Dalí took one and, with a pin, made a small hole in one end and a larger hole in the other. He blew the contents out into the bucket. He left the three of us performing this task and went to find Isidor Bea, his assistant. They both returned carrying trays laden with tins of paint. It had been difficult enough trying to get the eggs out of their shells without breaking them, and it was now even more difficult, not to say extremely messy, transferring the paint into the vacant spaces. We sealed the holes with tape.

Dalí was more skilful than the rest of us and complained bitterly that we had conspired to neglect his phobia. «You must save me from a fate worse than death. They have plagued me since before I was born. I hate them. My brother the genius hated them...». He was working and protesting happily. «They will be ex - or - cis - ed! Ex - or - cis - ed».

He quickly invented a better way of filling the empty shells. We poured the paint into plastic bags, made an aperture and squirted the paint into the eggs. We then changed bags, charging the eggs, not with one colour, but several. «The grasshoppers will be exorcised forever. For - ever», he cried, and I remembered our first date when he told me a grasshopper could leap through the gap between Verushka's thighs.



To the Divine, grasshoppers were like black cats, which he also detested. He liked ants, bees and flies. Snails he adored because they are androgynous. «They leave a trail like semen. Like the drool that soaks my pillow when I dream of money. They are delectable cooked in garlic».

When the eggs were ready, we carried them out to the garden. Bea, using broomsticks as props, erected several large canvases, each painted with a dark green grasshopper. Dalí threw an egg at one of the canvases, the shell broke and the paint erupted in an exquisite pattern of whirls and drips. «*Viva la Meurta*», he roared, the battlecry of Franco's Moslem mercenaries in the Civil War. «Long Live Death». His eyes were pulsating, as bright as the lights in a pinball machine. He threw one egg after the other, and grew more excited as the paint spread in kaleidoscopic layers that gradually obscured the odious insects. He started to jump up and down. Bea cleared away the egg shells and the Divine took aim. «I am free. I am free. Free - eee. It is per - fect...». We clapped and cheered and his aim became wildly exaggerated. There was paint over his hands and down his smock. The tips of his moustache had turned canary yellow and there were yellow spots on his glasses and wig.

«You may throw an egg, *Violetera*», he said and in this way he showed that while the others were merely paid servants, I was one of the court.

«The exorcism of grasshoppers by eggs is a secret formula discovered by Saint Narcissus the Patron Saint of Flies and lost to modern man». He stopped suddenly and stared at me with childlike gravity. «Have you seen a woman lay an egg? It is time you did».

The postman arrived with a telegram and the Action Painting came momentarily to a halt. «*Bonjour*», Dalí said and the postman made no reply. He was a short man with a large head and wore the expression of one who imagines he has seen it all when in fact he has seen nothing at all. On the bridge of his nose there was a narrow strip of plaster covering a very large boil. Dalí was in ecstasy.

«Did you see that festering sore? All that pus. All that poison. Sensational. Fantastic. It is a sign. The exorcism will be an unparalleled success. I knew this was going to be a lucky day when

I awoke from a wet dream in dripping sheets», he said as the postman was leaving. «We must be careful. There is a plague of boils sweeping through the village. The barber cut the head off a giant boil when he was shaving one of his customers and do you know what happened? Thousands of tiny spiders came running out and covered his face».

Rosa crossed herself. «Jesus Mary Mother of God», she moaned.

«There are millions of them. Millions. Everywhere. No one is safe». Dalí looked completely mad as he tore open the telegram. «It is another sign», he screamed. «We have a very important visitor. You must go to the station and meet her».

He was looking at me. «Me?», I gasped.

«Yes, Carlitos, you. You can take Bea's motorcycle. Bea must help with the exorcism».

«What about Arturo?».

«Arturo has gone shopping and always gets lost».

There was no arguing. Bea showed me how to drive his motorcycle and five minutes later I was guiding it cautiously along the narrow track from Port Lligat to the centre of Cadaqués. I passed the postman. He didn't wave and seemed disappointed leaving the labyrinth with nothing more juicy than Action Painting to report.

The road from Cadaqués winds through a pass between the Pani and Monte Negra, the hills so dark and dominant above the village the long shadows made me nervous. It was only the second time I had driven a motorcycle and it came as a relief when I saw a blonde woman in a long black coat waving hysterically from the roadside. She was one of those thin, *soigné* Americans who look thirty-five and fabulous in candlelight and I knew as I wobbled to a halt it was Dalí's visitor. Fleur Cowles was a journalist, painter, diplomat and confidant of the Shah of Persia who had combined her disparate gifts to write a memoir of Dalí which he condemned as tedious and banal, not that he ever told her so. By the time he died in 1989, there had been sixteen Dalí biographies and the only one he considered vaguely perceptive was Carlton Lake's unflattering *In Quest of Dalí*. «In the battle between the biographer and his victim, the first casualty is truth», he once remarked.

Fleur Cowles set about charming me with a torrent of twangy

French and was thrilled to learn that I had come to meet her. She had taken a taxi from the station in Figueres and the thing had exploded on the way. I could see it in the distance, the driver like an apparition being swallowed by a cloud of steam. Madame Cowles had gamely set out on foot carrying a suitcase and, of all things, a typewriter.

She climbed on the motorcycle with restless enthusiasm and her short skirt rose to reveal a narrow stretch of pale pink satin. I didn't know where to look. Gala's bed. Now this! She sat so close on the single seat the journey verged on the obscene. I kept moving forward and Madame Cowles kept moving closer. And closer. She seemed relieved to switch from French to English and chattered non-stop about nothing as I negotiated the ferocious curves that spiral down to the village.

When we reached the house, Dalí was standing outside and what happened could have been written in a script by his old friend Groucho Marx. My passenger waved, quite a feat without a free arm. He did not wave. I skidded around the fishing boat with a tree growing through its hull. And we both flew headlong into the bushes.

«*C'est colossal*. Very Dalinian», Dalí said and Fleur Cowles limped into the house with a bleeding leg. «An omen», he intoned. We went to the garden and he showed her the results of the Action Painting. He completed the work by signing the canvases, each with signatures so large it indicated the Divine put little value on them, whatever price the collectors would eventually pay.

«They remind me of Jackson Pollock's early work», the woman said and he stiffened. Pollock was the enemy.

«All - my - paintings - are - derivative», he replied, rolling his rs and lengthening the pauses in the exaggerated way reserved for Americans.

Fleur Cowles laughed. «Not true. Not true», she told him.

«I steal everything. Everything. I am a man without scruples. I am a man with no convictions». He looked out at the horizon and then back at his visitor with a puzzled expression. «At least, I think I am».

«But these are different».

«They are different because they were done by me and not by

someone else although someone else could have done them but then they would be worth less because they were done by someone else and I am Da - lí».

«I didn't mean your paintings are derivative».

«I am derivative? You think I am derivative?».

«No, no. You don't seem to understand what I'm trying to say».

«I understand what you do say and it is true and accurate. No work is original and no work of art is ever finished. Painting is like fire. The fire blazes and when it is extinguished, the hot embers remain. The next artist takes those embers and kindles a new fire. The flame is thus carried like the Olympic torch to shed light around the world. You know what Voltaire said...», and he hesitated and never told her.

«That was beautiful».

«What the world needs is hatred, not beauty. From hatred we grow strong. All fresh ideas burst from the shell of hatred. Come, you must be hungry».

As we made our way back through the garden to the house, we passed a small stone shed in the shade of an olive tree. He stopped and pointed with his stick. «That's where Anita Ekberg made pee-pee!», he exclaimed.

He led her into the kitchen and took a quail's egg from the glass jar on the shelf. He shelled it and added salt and pepper. «Here». He gave it to Fleur Cowles and she ate it. «Eggs are divine. Dalí was hatched from an egg, with Gala, the divine egg produced by Leda. The egg is a strongbox without hinges or lock. It is the most miraculous form in creation. I worship the cosmic oeuf», he said and, continuing in Catalan, his guest stared at him with the rapt attention of those who do not understand a word of what is being said to them.

«You arrive at a propitious time. I have been saved. I am a new man. The grasshoppers have been exorcised. Have another egg», he suggested and he peeled, salted and peppered a second. «Quail's eggs are an aphrodisiac», he added and Fleur Cowles smiled.

«Perhaps I don't need one», she said coyly and Dalí responded with a new trick: taking the first and second fingers of both hands and linking them in such a way that they formed a tube, he presented the result to her. She cupped her palm around his fingers.

«You are holding the Divine penis», he said and she shrieked and pulled her hand away. «I am going to my room to masturbate before I have a light lunch if you would like to come and watch», he told her and the diplomat, writer, painter, friend of the Shah turned the colour of Ambassador Mateo's Peralada champagne.

## *The Brothel*

We drove to Barcelona the following day. When we passed the abandoned taxi, Arturo said the same fate would one day befall the old Cadillac. «Nonsense. Clark Gable had the identical model and it never let him down», Dalí told him. He turned to me. «Madame Cowles is an prominent member of the American clitorati», he said, pinching my leg with what passed for affection.

I was dressed in white with an embroidered waistcoat and endless strings of wooden beads, elegant and exotic. People in the city would look at us, which was what he wanted. My eyes were accented with kohl and my hooped silver ear-ring had inspired the new sobriquet, Barbarossa, the legendary pirate who had flown the Skull and Crossbones into Cadaqués on missions of rape and pillage, a phenomenon repeated constantly through the centuries until the Barbary Coast pirates were finally defeated by the French in 1830.

It explained why the village people were furtive and distrustful. «They bear the fear of their grandmothers and great-grandmothers. The memory passes through the genes from generation to generation». Dalí spoke with great animation about the double-helix discovered by the English scientists Crick and Watson. «I knew thirty years ago that someone would find the formula. One day we will be able to remember what happened before the Ice Ages. We will find a way to unlock the closed part of the brain and in our mind's eye we will see what our ancestors were doing thousands of years ago. It is all there in our persistent memory», he said and it all made perfect sense. I had explored the secrets of my own DNA with drugs. When I had arrived in Spain the first time carrying Mijanou Bardot's four red cushions I had felt as if I were coming home, a South American Indian with remote recollections of another Europe.

«I predicted the double-helix in *The Persistence of Memory*. Time is a soft melting camembert. The present is passing, a shadow on the road from optimism to truth». He paused to stab me in the chest with his finger. «Each moment is a precious gift. When we put something off to be done another day that day never comes because each new day is finite and filled with its own unique promise. We can never return. There is never another time», he said and I was breathless just being in the company of such genius. He was in one of his instructive moods and filled the miles with art and science. Arturo was humming to himself and we sat in the back of the car like two people in a private bubble.

Captain Moore had reserved Dalí's usual suite at the *Ritz* and my room on the same floor was a jewellery box in pastel shades of silk: the lampshades, sheets, even the walls. It was gorgeous. «It is a room designed for *menearsela*», for «shaking it», Dalí said and he pantomimed the action. He was deadly serious, with a long sad face, which meant he was happy. He had been very tender those last few days, very attentive, as selfish people are. They take and take; they take so much, sometimes they go out of their way to be generous.

Dalí had brought a suitcase meticulously packed by Rosa. He was unable to unfasten the clasps and, when I did it for him, he peered inside with a look of sheer wonder and decided, as always, not to disturb the neatly folded clothes. He studied himself in the mirror.

«¿Cómo estoy?».

«Hombre. Muy guapo».

«Every year I grow more handsome. It is a rare affliction». He was trying to brush away the myriad stains on his lapels, a task like a quest in Greek mythology, and then straightened his contract-signing lucky tie; a blue one. He was wearing black trousers, a gold lamé jacket, a brocade waistcoat, his Alfonso XIII tie-pin and the Grand Cross of Isabella the Catholic. «The Queen who initiated the Inquisition and drove the Moors from Spain».

He had a supernatural way of choosing a subject and then illustrating it by layers of coincidence that grew like the Action Paintings in intricate contours. He had mentioned Franco's Moslem soldiers in the Civil War the previous day. Now, hissing contempt

for the people of North Africa, as we left the suite and approached the elevator, two Arabs wearing robes and dark glasses were standing at the closed doors. He became hysterical. He gripped my arm, raised his Sarah Bernhardt cane and whispered: «They have eye diseases», in a voice that was loud enough for them to hear. «Queen Isabella understood...».

He refused to enter the elevator when it came and stood there trembling fitfully while we waited for its return. «Do they have visas? Does the General know they are here? There is no class at the Ritz any more, Barbarossa», he complained and then he told me about the Count who had once been a regular guest. «He was the cleanest most immaculate man in the world. He had freshly minted money sent from the bank every morning and at lunch he would always have grapes that he peeled with a knife and fork. He was a man who despised Arabs».

Arturo drove us to the museum and, after my lesson in Spanish art, we walked through the narrow streets of the Barrio Gótico where emporiums of the grotesque and curious displayed the most amazing things. We found a shark's jaw lined with jagged teeth, the skull of a dead baby, a stuffed chimpanzee, a glass eye, some quartz. «Look, ten million years old and still there is a glow inside. It is the light from a star that exploded before man crawled out of the sea and invented God». He bought it for me as a present and he bought the glass eye for himself.

We zigzagged our way through the stone maze around the cathedral to Calle de la Paja, where Dalí purchased his art materials at a shop that had supplied Picasso, Joan Miró and Josep Dalmau, the Catalan painter-turned-dealer who had given Dalí his first Paris exhibition in 1925. I was a child in Disneyland. I could hear the footsteps of tradition tapping away in the past. The very dust tasted of history. The great Spanish painters had hurried into that little store with their minds full of wonders and had stood in the very spot where I was now standing. They had been served by the same stooped, blissful individual hovering bird-like over the counter, a saintly man of infinite courtesy and extreme age. Dalí ordered twenty fine brushes and forty tins of silver paint. «I will send them to the hotel immediately, Maestro», the saint said with a bow and, uncharacteristically, Dalí bowed back.



In the same street, on the corner, there was a dingy cutler's selling daggers and deadly weapons. Dalí pointed in the window. «Buñuel carries a flick-knife he bought here to protect himself from the critics», he said.

Opposite, there was a small, cramped building with a piquant aroma that reminded me of a medicine man's hut I had once visited with my grandmother in the jungle outside Barranquilla. Inside, tall shapely urns of dark blue glass stood on wooden shelves studded with brass name plates. Bunches of twigs, dried herbs and spices hung from the ceiling. The skinned bodies of anonymous reptiles floated in jars of formaldehyde and I thought of Gala as they focused on me through the liquid miasma. Dalí required two-hundred grams of dead flies. He was working on a painting of a swarm of flies and planned to add real eyes to the canvas. He discussed the project with the apothecary who suggested using the eyes of larger insects in order to enhance the effect. But Dalí vigorously shook his head. He was a purist.

«Only flies can see in all directions at once. Their eyes are composed of parabolic curves arranged in a pattern simulated in the roof of the railway station at Perpignan, as everyone knows», he said.

«Of course», said the apothecary. «I should have given it more thought».

«Flies are the muses of the Mediterranean. The Greek philosophers would lie around naked covered in flies», Dalí continued. «And we must not forget Dante's account of the French invasion of Spain in 1303».

The apothecary, a thin man with a long, pointed nose, banged his fist on the counter. His lips tightened.

«The Spanish were so heavily outnumbered their only course of action was to pray to Saint Narcissus, whose body remains in a state of perfect preservation in Girona. They prayed and prayed and their prayers were finally answered by a miracle. A plague of flies arose from the saint's open casket. They attacked Philip the Bold's cavalry and the Frenchmen fled in disarray».

«The Patron Saint of Flies», the apothecary said dreamily as he wrapped the dead flies in a cone of parchment-coloured paper.

«It is difficult these days to find anyone who makes sense except

those who agree with us», Dalí said as we were leaving the shop. We bought flowers from an old gypsy woman and went to have lunch at Via Veneto, a restaurant of unbridled kitsch where the waiters wore sycophantic expressions and shirts of frilly pink lace. The decorator had copied *Maxim's* in Paris but had got it wonderfully wrong. It was tasteless, expensive and when Dalí was in Barcelona he refused to eat anywhere else.

He ordered snails, to celebrate the exorcism of grasshoppers, and insisted I had the same. «It is a tragedy that eating snails isn't a sin», he said in a solemn voice. «Only fear and guilt have the intoxicating flavour of sublime pleasure. We enjoy most what we are not permitted and I am permitted everything. We are diminished by every dream that comes true».

I consumed a carafe of table wine and Don Salvador drank *Vichy Catalan*, sparkling water with an odd salty taste. He talked about Miró, whose advice to Dalí in the 1920s that an artist arriving in Paris needed a gimmick, Dalí was to take very much to heart. Miró also helped his young compatriot make a dinner jacket ornamented with glasses of crème de menthe, each with a fly floating in the green liqueur, the costume more surreal than anything dreamed up by the Surrealists. «It was a pity he came from Majorca», Dalí said, a code for his opinion on Miró's psychedelic abstracts.

He jumped to his feet and we were off. I never knew where we were going or what was going to happen next. It was always to be a surprise although, where I had once believed everything Dalí did was spontaneous, I was now beginning to wonder if everything was minutely planned. The Divine had the timing of a juggler and occasionally referred to himself as such.

Arturo appeared with the car and chauffeured us to the fashionable Paseo de Gràcia. A group of sightseers and photographers was waiting outside *La Pedrera*, the building designed for the Milà family by the architect Antoni Gaudí. The edifice was like an oasis in the desert blocks of grey city streets. It was like standing at the foot of a gigantic beehive, a honeycomb of concave and convex balconies that soared in swaying patterns into the summer sky. «Gaudí has combined Gothic and Moorish styles to create a spatial liberation that is wholly original. He was, unlike Joan Miró, a true Catalan genius», Dalí told the reporters and I

adored the beguiling curves, the art nouveau towers and the Divine's spiralling seductive mind. He showed how Gaudí had an eye for even the most insignificant detail and pointed out these minute features with the tip of his cane. The cameras followed us to the roof where the whimsical structures made the ideal setting for Dalinian excess. A dozen naked girls were running around, proud of their pretty skinny bodies, and giggled like professional virgins when it was time to have their bottoms painted in printer's ink.

Dalí sat them down on sheets of canvas and the television cameras recorded the event, not that Franco's censors allowed those bare bottoms on the nine o'clock news.

«I am making angel's wings at the direct request of the Pope», he said. The journalists laughed and, like everything Dalí said, there was a hint of truth hidden in the absurdity. One of his paintings featuring angel's wings made from the imprint of a girl's bottom was hanging in the Vatican.

«Dado Ruspoli, my friend the Italian Prince, the man with the biggest limousine in Europe, saw this masterpiece and fell in love with the angel's wings. I introduced the Prince to the delectable creature who made them for the Pope, and he was so delighted he married her. Italians are great lovers. Of themselves», Dalí said and the reporters scribbled his words into their notebooks.

«What kind of limousine?», one of them asked.

«The one your wife would most admire», he answered and, with the cane, he pointed at the man's private parts.

Then, someone wanted to know who I was. «A Communist», he said.

The crowd followed us back to the Ritz where the suite became a circus filled with characters more outrageous than anyone I had met at the daily Princes' and Paupers' Tea in Paris. A harlequin with a powder white face was riding a unicycle around the room and Louis XIV appeared with two midgets holding the train of a royal purple ball gown. Dalí introduced her daughters. «Peach and the Dauphin», he called them, and they bowed in unison like actors in a Renaissance play. The Twins were dressed identically as disciples of Jesus and stood silently drinking with Pandora, tall and golden like a tropical bird in a long green dress. «Bok, bok, bok, bok, bok, bok, bok», she said.

«Bok, bok, bok», Dalí replied.

Said John: «Like the...».

«... music?», said Dennis. «It's...».

«... Indian», said John.

A thin bearded man in a saffron dhoti was playing a repetitious lament on the sitar and a girl with a red spot on her forehead was mournfully keeping time on a set of silver cymbals. A human beast clad in a dog suit was worrying the Captain's ocelots as it howled at an invisible moon. The smell of incense disguised the more acrid perfume of marijuana and the smoke danced in dervisher whirls over the ornate ceiling.

Reynolds Morse attempted to take Dalí in a hug and Eleanor Morse kissed my cheek. She had just had her face done and looked fabulous. «Are - you - still - taking - the - monkey - glands?», Dalí asked her, dragging at my arm, not waiting for a reply, and we moved into the orbit of a half-crazed inventor with Einstein hair who had made a set of chocolate chessmen. Dalí ate the pieces as we executed a rapid and noisy game. He had taught me how to play and within a few weeks I had been able to beat him. He did not have the patience for strategy and could never understand how Duchamp and Peter Ek, the Swedish painter, had spent so many sunny days at the *Marítima* in Cadaqués staring down at a chessboard. Dalí fed the white king to the harlequin and told the inventor to make an appointment with his *homme d'affaires*.

One of the models from the Gaudí building had painted the rest of her body in printer's ink and was sitting cross-legged on the table holding a silver platter containing a phallic-looking sausage. She was being photographed by Enric Sabater, whom Dalí described as the Court Photographer. Captain Moore shadowed the man's every move like a bird of prey, not knowing Señor Sabater was the predator and he, the Captain, would soon be en route to the abattoir.

Sabater had penetrated the Divine circle that summer in 1970 and had made a great impression on two accounts: he had become Gala's lover, always a sensible thing to do; and, even more brilliant, he had taken a photograph of Dalí at the moment when a fly landed on the tip of his moustache. Sabater had been a reporter for *Los Sitios*, the Girona newspaper, a driver for *Radio Liberty*, a waiter and

a professional soccer player. He was handsome, earthy, a Catalan whose photograph of the fly was the foundation of his future role as Dalí's secretary, and his own role as a multi-millionaire. I had always felt it, known it by instinct, by Indian intuition: In this life, we need just one lucky shot.

I met Antonio Pitxot, Dalí's friend since childhood, whom Dalí introduced as «The Camembert». He was a man who could never make up his mind about anything and, like a ripe camembert, like Dalí's soft watches, melted into the situation's required shape. The French photographer, Robert Descharnes, the man who would take a mould of Dalí's face the day he died, shook my hand and arranged to meet me in Paris to make a series of portraits which he did and I never saw. I called a thousand times but the ten year diary on his desk was completely full.

Pitxot and Descharnes, with Enric Sabater and the lawyer Miguel Domenech, were the men who filled the void after Gala's death in 1982 and prospered magnificently with an imbroglio of complex deals that so degraded Dalí's work even Dalí the man has to many become an object of derision. He became a victim of his own paranoia-critica: he boasted of his impotence and became impotent; he brooded over his father's prediction that he would die alone, unloved, his hair crawling in lice, and he died alone, loved solely by the people prevented from seeing him; he wanted to cretinize the world and became cretinized; broken; tormented. His paintings when he died were worth millions, but his bank accounts were empty. He was never a businessman and was always confused by money. I have seen him give a taxi driver 1,000 francs in error for 100. The tab for my room at the *Ritz* in Barcelona would have been enormous and it was all paid with a generosity that made his miserly moments seem all the more irrational. Montserrat Dalí, the daughter of one of Dalí's many cousins, remembers sewing money into Dalí's clothes so that he didn't lose it, and still he lost it.

She was there at the *Ritz* that afternoon, a sparkling little woman who had been taught as a child by Ana María, Dalí's sister, to sing unkind songs about Gala. I liked her immediately. She was with Gonzalo Serraclara, another cousin, a man so charming the livid gash across his face seemed decidedly Dalinian. He smiled and I stepped backwards into the path of the unicyclist who stopped

dead, turned, and went hurrying off in the opposite direction. The naked girl painted in printer's ink was being carried around the room like a feast on a silver platter, and Curtis Jones, the black actor who had just played an astonishing *Othello* in Paris, was following behind bearing the phallic sausage. The man (or woman) in dog's clothing had rolled on to its stomach and was growling contentedly under the soothing strokes of Ivy Nicholson, a *Vogue* model and Andy Warhol actress. I saw the back view of a bishop and assumed it was Léonor Fini.

Dalí emerged with his stick and drew me into a corner with Pandora. He removed his handkerchief, slowly unfolded it and, nestling in the bed of white linen, glinting in the lights, was the glass eye we had found in the Barrio Gótico. Pandora screeched.

«Bok, bok, bok, bok, bok», she said.

«Bok, bok, bok, bok, bok», he replied.

The pink champagne flowed from five until seven and, as the arms of the party pulled us in different directions, I was suddenly jealous not to have Dalí's undivided attention. Almost everyone who surrounded the court hoped to get something from him but I always considered being a member was an end in itself. I had no ulterior motives. Young boys would happily sleep with Gala for *logé nouri*, «bed and breakfast», as she called it, a small amount. Boys would masturbate for Don Salvador hoping he would give them a drawing, although he never did. Couples would make love in front of him for no other reason than he dared to suggest it. Ivy Nicholson conceived twins after performing in the egg room in Port Lligat with her rich husband. «It was the best time ever». She was going to name the twins John and Dennis, after the Twins, but one of them was a girl and so she abandoned the idea.

The last time I saw Ivy was in 1989 in a bar on the Champs Élysée frequented by lonesome Americans. She had lost her rich husband and all her money but continued to wear an ironic expression. Her job was to sit at the bar and entice men to buy her cocktails. Very gracefully, she crossed her long slender legs. «I drink to live», she said with a smile. We talked about the Divine. He had just died and those summer days of the early seventies seemed so very precious. I was free and, like an old slave, I was unsure what to do with my freedom.

There were more than twenty people at dinner at the Via Veneto and I knew Dalí was impatient by the way he kept hurrying the waiters. He had signed various contracts —brought to the Ritz because Gala had not been there to vet them— and now it was time to play. The dessert plates were cleared and he came to his feet. «*Pas de café, pas de café, pas de café*», he said, his finger moving around the table like the second hand on a clock. Everyone laughed but no one was served, unique in Spain, where taking coffee after a meal is a point of national pride.

He sent Arturo away and we walked down the Ramblas to the Barrio Gótico through streets lined with dark bars, gay bars, seedy nightclubs, private porno-picture clubs, strip clubs, café's where streetwalkers and pimps shouted obscenities and sailors sold watches they bought cheaply in Hong Kong. The more repressive the government, Dalí explained, the more crime, drugs and prostitution flourishes. «There is less dissent when the people are given soporifics. The General understands these things. He is a man who spent many years in Africa».

At the *Barcelona di Noche* we sat at a table by the stage and watched a strip show. There were a number of acts: a girl; two girls; then a girl barely more than a child who performed with a man blessed with bulging muscles and hair beyond the call of manliness. «*La Belle et la Bête*», Dalí whispered. The last routine was the best. An exotic girl with dark hair as long as my own danced to seductive music, slowly revealing small, perfect breasts, slender thighs suitable for grasshoppers to leap through and a neat bottom ideal for making angel's wings. She turned finally to display a flaccid but generous penis and through my mind flashed a crowded collage consisting of the Maasai, the King of the Gypsies, the schoolgirl, my friend Laura Jamieson and all the heroes of the *Perroquet Rouge*.

The boy-girl left the stage and kissed the Divine on both cheeks. He kissed her back and, as he sat there stroking her bottom, I realized something that had never occurred to me before: Dalí was a voyeur, a masturbator, a perverter. But, if he did have a sexual inclination, it was for men and men only. He was gay. He hated to be touched by women and I could sense his feeling of distaste on the rare occasions when it happened.

Lots of people gathered around and he was in raptures being the

centre of attention. Everyone at the club seemed to know him. Someone opened a bottle of champagne, which he gave me to carry, and we left the *Barcelona di Noche* with two glasses. «No one will ever be as perfect as Amanda», he said. Then his expression changed and he stopped to look into my eyes. «It is time you learned the secret of quail's eggs, Violetera. There is no such bird as a quail. It is a myth. A hoax. They are extinct. They are as dead as the phoenix».

We moved deeper into the heart of the barrio and came to a halt at a dark and windowless building. Dalí knocked at a door studded with large iron nails and a grill slid back. The door groaned open and we entered a hallway illuminated by candles. The owner of the premises was an older woman who had been a flamenco dancer and a friend of Dolores Ibarruri, La Pasionaria, the heroine of the Spanish Republic in its doomed struggle against Franco. Her name was Trinidad and she was the most famous brothel keeper in Barcelona.

Dalí and Trinidad spoke in Catalan and I understood little of what they were saying. They seemed very pleased to see each other. «I have brought you some champagne», he said and I followed them into a large living room furnished with antique chairs and lit by elegant lamps. The woman left the room and we sat for a long time in silence. Trinidad eventually returned with several women of various ages from very young to really rather old; some attractive and some quite the reverse. I knew instinctively whom Dalí was going to choose: the youngest, the thinnest and the oldest, a corpulent woman wearing bulky ear-rings. «Fat women always wear ear-rings», he said. He was trying not to smile, because of the wrinkles, but was madly happy. I felt at that moment that I was in the heart and soul of life, not peeking in at the window, as I had done so often at the Consuegra house in Barranquilla.

We remained in the room, which I gathered was a privilege. Dalí sat. I stood behind his chair. I put my hand on his shoulder and we joined fingers. The women left and then the young one returned with a glass bowl containing a live fish. She danced for a few minutes, quickly discarding her clothes. She began to kiss the bowl, crawling around it and gazing lustfully at the unsuspecting fish. It was long, shiny and black. The girl fished it out, kissed it and then



proceeded to feed it between her spread thighs. The Divine became very excited as the girl began to push the fish in and out of her body. She was moaning with satisfaction. «More, more», he said and she moaned even louder. Every two or three minutes she put the fish back in the bowl and then took it out again. She moved crab-like towards Dalí, gave him the fish and he yelled with delight as he pumped it into her.

The performance came to an end and the girl went skipping out like a child. «Few people know who I really am, Carlitos», Dalí whispered and I had the feeling I was privy to a secret.

He squeezed my hand with unusual gentleness as the older woman came in. She must have been fifty or sixty and seemed absolutely ancient. The pink underwear that clothed her as tightly as skin she summarily and unerotically removed. She offered a sagging breast to the Divine and he flinched away. She glanced down at him with a look of contempt and he liked this. «The female subdues the male. She is the praying mantis and I am the innocent fly». He squirmed in his seat and pointed to the space in front of him with his stick. The woman bent over so the Divine could inspect her anus. «Look, there is nothing there», he said with satisfaction.

From his pocket, he took a quail's egg which he peeled and gave the woman. She ate it and made herself comfortable in an armchair.

A few minutes passed before the third woman entered. She was a contortionist, as thin as a toothpick, and was able to bend her body in incredible ways. She lit a cigarette, bent over backwards until her head appeared through her legs, and transferred the cigarette to the pecking cleft of her vagina. She became completely still and, by the power of muscle control, the cigarette began to smoke by itself. I was amazed. Dalí waved his stick through the air. «Bravo», he said. «Bravísimo». The tip of the cigarette flared, the paper burned down and smoke poured from the woman in a steady stream. She removed the cigarette and stubbed it out. She then sat on the floor and, rolling forward, she made love to herself with her tongue.

Dalí clapped and then took my hand again. The older woman left her chair in the corner and came to stand before us. She looked deadly serious as she turned and bent over. She pulled back the

cheeks of her heavy rump with large red hands, made a vulgar noise and, suddenly, an egg appeared. It was a quail's egg. The contortionist took it from the human egg cup, peeled it and gave it to Dalí who popped it straight into his mouth.

«Mmm. Delicious», he said.

## *Journey To The East*

I had patience. Perhaps I lacked perseverance. Time would tell but at twenty-two time is in short supply. After dreaming in Gala's hut of being chased from the stage at the *Theatre Porte Saint Martin*, I had found little difficulty in giving up my role in *Hair*. I would return to the cast, and quit again. But the first time was like cutting the umbilical cord and beginning life over without Dalí.

His yearly cycle brought him back to Paris in the spring with his brain brimming with ideas for chessmen and holograms. He had just designed an outrageous chess set for the American Chess Foundation using moulds of fingers and teeth for pieces and was obsessed with the belief that the hologram was going to take his art into the third dimension.

He was preoccupied with *Holos! Holos! Velázquez! Gabor!*, a vast, metaphysical work incorporating a photograph of some card players and a copy of *Las Meninas*, the Velázquez masterpiece he adored and envied. Dalí believed the painting had captured the very taste of the air in the artist's studio. «If the Prado were on fire and I could save one canvas, *Las Meninas* would be the one».

Dalí's two facsimiles had been angled on different planes and mounted on sheets of glass, the double image creating the first holographic photomontage. «Technology is a savage beast domesticated by Dalí and transformed into the breast eternally bounteous in milk».

He held my arm as we marched through the Royal Suite at the season's first Princes' and Paupers' Tea at the *Hôtel Meurice*. It had rained all winter and beyond the windows Les Tuileries was as glossy as a cat's eye. The sun was relaying lines of light through the clouds and the gilt mirrors glimmered with lunacy. Everyone was

there: Gala; the ocelots; Louis XIV; John and Dennis Myers; Amanda Lear on the arm of David Bowie, pouting with false orgasms; Edward James wearing the grieved mien of a man Dalí invariably ignored because Dalí imagined he was forever in the Englishman's debt. Sir Edward saved Gala and the Divine from the Spanish Civil War and had supported them in Italy before they sailed to America. Dalí never forgave him.

I was dressed in velvet; soft and sumptuous: blue trousers, a blue cape that brushed the floor, leather boots with Cuban heels and my hair in the long pigtail of a Chinese sage. I carried a copy of Hermann Hesse's *The Glassbead Game*, a gift from Amanda, a cult book among the young Dalí had dismissed as utopian fantasy. His fixations were as permanent as a birth mark: a surreal fusion of the scientific and perverse: holograms and incest. «In ancient Egypt, the pharaohs made nyacki-nyacki with their sisters and mothers. Incest is the privilege of monarchy», Dalí explained as German twins, a boy and a girl he named Adam and Eve, dramatized the *Kama Sutra* for a favoured few whisked across the corridor to the salon opposite. Donyale Luna, naked under a nun's habit, crawled across the floor with the costume raised to reveal the holy orifice. A girl did some remarkable things with a ping-pong ball and we viewed the performance in a large mirror set so Dalí could study the audience as well as the girl. He was beginning to enjoy watching people watching his shows more than watching them himself.

It was a New Year with a new round of fetishes and repetitions. There was a hedonist in me Dalí encouraged, but I was equally drawn to the renunciate stirring in the shadows of my character. We are, all of us, a coiling confusion of *yin* and *yang*.

I had resigned from *Hair* to go to India with some friends who had broken away from the Living Theater and Judith Melina had taken the body of the company on an ill-fated voyage to Brazil, where the authorities were less than tolerant of their anarchic message. Most of them ended up in jail on drugs charges and the United States government had to intervene to get them out. The leader of the splinter group was Rufus Collins, a rebellious New Yorker inclined more towards the spiritual than the Marxist view of universal brotherhood. He had secured financial support from Oliver Bolan, the owner of a brewery in Holland, and planned to create a new

theatrical piece based on Indian dance, music and tantric mysticism.

It was exactly what I wanted but, when I told Dalí I was serving out my last days with *Hair*, he behaved as if it were a premeditated attack on him: his life; his art; the Catalan nation. I was giving up a career he had launched and I would be abandoning the role I played in the private drama of his life: the angel; androgyne; the ornament. Dalí had never quite forgiven me for not dying young like a flower and hated the sense of releasing the elusive grip he had on my life. «I always knew you would sting me in the balls one day».

He augmented his insults with prolonged condemnations of all things Eastern, combined with praise for the entire corpus of Western philosophy including, paradoxically, the Catholic church. It was marvellous, so brilliant it was hard not to take notes.

But Indians are stubborn as well as patient. He kept up the assault until he realized his efforts were in vain and, still acting the patriarch, when the day of my departure arrived, he drove me to the station, kissed me on both cheeks and gave me a dirty paper bag sealed with elastic bands. «You will never leave me», he said, something he had said before only now I had a better idea of what it meant. When powerful men have domination over another, they kick, cajole, flatter, scream, weep and do anything, however irrational, however demeaning, rather than surrender that domination. Even if they grow to hate the person under their spell, they still want to keep them in reach.

I watched the car disappear from view and joined the rest of the group. There were twelve of us with long hair and head bands, with shoulder bags and fresh smiles that horrified the tired and timid commuters. I opened the little package as the train entered a dull Paris morning and inside there was a huge roll of money, the bills freshly minted like the notes once sent daily to the *Ritz* in Barcelona for the Count who ate grapes with a knife and fork.

Only the journey to India prepares you for India. India is like a cautious lover. Her voice is soft; her embrace ethereal. The train travels the route of the Orient Express to Istanbul and a new train takes four days to cross the rocky steppes of Persia. We ate Turkish halvah and read books on yoga. The land outside was lit by

mirages. Distant caravans glided across the horizon and I understood why camels are known as the ships of the desert. I adored the emptiness. The landscape was a meditation, pure and eternal. The train would grind to a stop for no apparent reason in the middle of nowhere and children with stern features would appear in Arab djellabas and plastic shoes. They carried trays of hot sweet tea and pocketed our dinars we paid them with casual grace.

The rail tracks come to an end at Iran's border with Afghanistan where the people have dark eyes in faces as lined as furrowed fields. There was an ancient wisdom in this land, a feeling of completeness. There was no sense of envy for the watches we wore and the money we spent. A truck garishly painted with scenes from the Koran took us from the border to Herat where the famous black hashish wafted in clouds from the tea houses lining the main street, squat wooden buildings with low doors like tent flaps. I bought a long sheepskin coat with golden embroidery and a silver ring with a turquoise stone.

The sky was impossibly blue and I wandered dreamily through the dusty streets until I passed through an invisible barrier into a place where I did not belong. It was where the people lived in mud brick houses shaped like giant beehives. Each step I took the day grew hotter. Families watched me impassively from outside their hovels.

Then, everything appeared to go into slow motion: a boy bent to pick up a stone and, when he threw it at me, it seemed to be a signal for everyone to do the same. There were no men present, just women and children. No one raised their voice or gave chase. They just stoned me as I ran. It was Biblical. I arrived back at the centre of Herat covered in small bruises, not angry but, on the contrary, I felt more in empathy with the people, more conscious of those abstract, universal principles that separate the seeker from the voyeur; the traveller from the tourist.

A relay of sweaty buses took us over the Khyber Pass where Arab warriors on glossy black horses watched from the hills with a sense of aloof amusement. We crossed into Pakistan, a sort of ugly sister to Mother India, and three days later, we were in India itself. Bananas were on sale at the border. The woman selling them had a joyous expression, unveiled and open. She taught me my first Hindi

words: *namastey*, a greeting for all occasions; and *shukreya*, thank you. As I gradually learned how to order tea and recite the courtesies, I would be amazed how a few words in another man's tongue can create such warmth and friendship, build such bridges.

We journeyed from the Sikh holy city of Amritsar on trains filled with lean silent people to Naini Tal, a hill station amidst pretty lakes below the snowy peaks of the Himalayas. We had set out for the town in order to begin our studies with Baba Maharajji Neem Karoli, a miracle maker who built ashrams in destitute villages, mixing India's poor with the European initiates in a soup that nourished each of us in the manner we needed most. We read the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Upanishads*. We learned puja rituals and danced a ballet to the sound of the sitar. The nights were luxuriously warm and the words of our Guru were the bright stars that illuminated the void of eternal space. Baba Karoli was like the sandalwood tree and the soft winds that drifted down from the mountains diffused the perfume of his teachings through the atmosphere. I was intoxicated.

Dalí wrote terse postcards to the ashrams where I stayed in Kainchi, Brinaban and Naini Tal, and I received one letter dictated to Captain Moore and sent to admonish me for not writing to my mother, as if Don Salvador really cared about such things.

We did not see each other again until the following summer, in 1972. When I arrived in Cadaqués he behaved as if I had been away for the weekend. «I didn't see you in church Sunday», he said and he never went to church unless he was being honoured. «I am a Católico Apostólico Romano and a very good friend of the Pope». He gave me a book about the life of St Theresa of Avilla, the Carmelite mystic. «You must read it twice. You should read everything twice. All knowledge is secreted in the written word. I fear and despise nothing more than ignorance. You must read, listen and learn. When you are ready, I shall burst your cerebral hymen».

He was too amusing; too powerful to resist. I slotted back into my role and spent every morning modelling in the studio. During this period he created the *Homage to Newton*, the tall, slender bronze now outside the *Teatro Museo* in Figueres... «a Carlos», he whispered and the hole through the head and heart were a sly comment on my journey to the East.

In his endeavours to make every second count twice, he poached time from commercial contracts to work on pieces for the museum. He had been commissioned to design a new set of Tarot cards and, while I was posing for the *Newton* sculpture, he would switch from pencils to palette and work on his version of The Sun, the nineteenth card of the Major Arcana. He painted me as Apollo with a blank expression and my left arm loosely clinging to a crutch. «You are a guru fucker, Carlitos», he said. I was naked, very thin, really rather beautiful. I felt cleansed by India but Dalí decoded this as being empty. «You are the sun on a cloudy day», he continued. «An exploded sun that has disappeared. You have vanished into an abyss. You are a hollow surrounded by a vacuum wrapped in a void. Remove the surroundings from a hole and you are left with nothing. From nothing comes nothing: Shakespeare».

He was sitting at the easel in his red *bérétina* and cowboy shirt gathering the strands of his diverse and sour thoughts. «I am going to build an upside-down room for all you guru fuckers and hippies on drugs», he said derisively, sketching in bold strokes, looking mean and delighted. His eyes gleamed as he talked. He was always adding extensions to the house and the upside-down room was the latest invention. His plan was to confuse the senses of his guests by having the door leading into the room set at the top of a wall so that you stepped straight into a white ceiling with a single light stem growing from the centre. The walls within were going to be decorated with scenes of Port Lligat, all inverted, and a false window lit from behind would contain a reversed view of the sea and sky. The floor above was to be furnished with banquettes, cushions and lamps, the Divine's six-legged chairs, some tables containing bottles and half-filled glasses, shelves of books and a surface of polished ceramic tiles. «It will be my anti-gravity room».

He was very excited about the project but, like many, this one never reached fruition. The secret, he said, is to have a hundred ideas and, if ten of them materialize, it is nine more than the man who only has one.

Leaning against the wall at the back of the studio there was a gorgeous painting of Amanda with an exquisite body and wings of red feathers. She became the Tarot's Temperance and looked more like a virgin than any virgin. There was also the beginnings of a



new study of Gala emerging from a lake as The Empress. «Gala represents Motherhood», Dalí said with an irony just visible in the lines that ran across his brow. «She has given birth to the world. She is all-loving, the mother of everyone. You must go and read the cards for her, Carlitos. She has missed you».

I had stopped listening. I was thinking back three years to the attic room at Ursula Kubler's house in Paris and the night when the cards for Temperance, The Sun and The Empress had fallen into a pattern that predicted my magical life. Dalí was The Magician, the Tarot's first card, the persona he had chosen for himself. He painted a self-portrait with glaring, hypnotic eyes, the figure sitting below tall church arches at a table containing bread and wine: Christian symbols of transformation. Everything was connected, linked, overlapped; a jibe or a joke; a gesture; always subtle and surreal; an attempt to cretinize.

I smiled for some reason and he shouted: «Apollo is the patron of poetry. He has nothing to laugh about».

## ***Hari Krishna, Hari Rama, Hari Hari***

We went often to Figueres that summer to inspect progress on the *Teatro Museo*. He liked to get suggestions from everyone. He would listen and file everything away in the banks of his incredible memory. When one of my ideas was incorporated, as some were, he would make a point of showing me and saying how brilliant he had been to have thought of it. If I challenged him he would become hysterical. «I am the genius. Dalí. I am the one. I am feeding everyone. How dare you. How dare you». It would be an astonishing scene but best avoided.

During the first excursion, I was still too full of India to do anything but gasp with admiration at everything I saw. The builders were working on the construction of a geodesic dome shaped like the eye of a fly. «When the birds shit the rain will wash it evenly all over the surface. That is monarchy. On the flat roof, the shit remains in one place. That is democracy».

The central core of the theatre was circular and, around the top of the walls, Dalí was installing wash basins on pedestals in homage to the day when, as a child, he was so thirsty instead of taking a glass of water, he plugged the basin, lay on the floor and waited for the water to overflow into his mouth. «It was then that my father knew I was truly mad», he said and pinched my arm.

We had tea at the *Astoria*; cheese and honey... «a feast fit for the Saviour», and drove back over the hills to Cadaqués. The afternoon was sultry. There were few people on the streets but, as we reached the square, a striking girl cloaked in a veil of poetry and secrets walked dreamily in front of the car. Luckily, Arturo Caminada never drove very fast. He pulled to a halt and the girl wandered on without giving us a second look.

«Do you know who that is?», Dalí asked.

«Of course. It is Marsha Chase. She's from New York».

«You must invite her to the house. Immediately. She is the most beau - ti - ful creature in Cadaqués».

Arturo followed her in the car and we stopped once again. Dalí was like a child, hiding behind me and giggling. Marsha smiled. Her blue eyes full of primitive innocence peeked out through a waterfall of chestnut hair and, in the flicker of her long dark eye-lashes, she gave you the feeling she was about to take her clothes off.

«Dalí would like to invite you to his house for a glass of champagne this evening», I said.

«I'm sorry. I've already made other plans», she replied. She turned away and vanished through the arch that leads to the oldest part of the village.

«*Mag - ni - fi - que*. She is a girl to make men dream of being heterosexual. She is the mother of fertility. She is Diana, the virgin huntress hunting for love», he said and his eyes popped out on stalks. Everyone said yes to a summons from Dalí and he adored it when people declined. «You must send her a dozen red roses tomorrow and you must make a point of inviting her every day until she comes».

His cheesy breath was hot in my ear. Being in the back of the old Cadillac was like being in the body of an animal. The seats were upholstered in black fur and the windows had the glazed look of glaucoma. The smell was awful.

The Morses arrived in town and as always I admired Dalí's boundless energy. Gala read while I continued to model for The Sun.

The Morses had arrived with two assistants and they all crowded into the studio with a film camera and miles of leads that wriggled through the house like a plague of serpents. Reynolds Morse was wearing a cowboy hat and Eleanor looked marvellous. Every time I saw her she appeared younger. Another ten years and Mr Morse would find himself under arrest for abducting a minor.

They were making a documentary about Dalí's work called *Pink Grapefruit*. Dalí was the star as well as the director. We moved from the studio to the garden. I was draped in a piece of red cloth and, like some Aztec chieftain, I solemnly crushed the Divine with a papier mâché boulder. Gala, dressed in her mink coat, was running

around screaming in Russian and Mrs Morse looked like a china doll with staring eyes and a petrified smile.

«It - was - very - wise - to - put - a - hole - in - the -doughnut», Dalí was saying for the benefit of the sound man, crawling out from under the rock, continuing a theme that meant nothing to Reynolds Morse. «The Swiss put holes in cheese and we must pay as much for the hole as we do for the cheese. They are ingenious people. The hole is greatly undervalued. What is a needle without a hole? While a man searches over the valleys and crevices of a woman, it is the crack, the slit, the hole he wishes to find».

«Fascinating!».

«Where would the playwright be without the pause? We drill holes in the earth to find oil and gas, integral to our well-being and destruction. There are holes in the ozone layer that let the light out and allow the darkness in. Remove the surroundings from a hole and you are left with nothing. From nothing comes nothing». He glanced at me.

«Shakespeare», I said and the Morses swooned.

«I work seventeen hours a day. The measure of my genius is the size of the hole I perforate in abstract matter. I have a tape recording of a girl in bed with two men we can use for a soundtrack. Or would you prefer Vivaldi?».

«No, no. That's okay», said Mr Morse.

«She has seven orgasms».

We retired to the kitchen where Rosa was waiting with a jug of lemonade and a bottle of wine. Reynolds Morse had left his jacket on the back of a chair and Gala blatantly took his wallet and removed the money.

«What are you doing?», he asked.

«We must be paid for our work», Gala replied.

«But I'll give you a cheque».

«No, no. I must have cash», she said and her black eyes alighted on me. «Carlos needs new shoes».

Reynolds Morse went to speak but nothing came out. Eleanor stared off into the distance, always smiling. Gala shuffled the money into her handbag and Rosa poured the wine, her features composed, the perfect servant. Dalí made everyone surreal.

«You must try the wine», he said. «It is from the dead vines of

Cadaqués and so unpretentious. It is one of the great mysteries of the Mediterranean. The wines have a unique bouquet containing a sense of unreality. One sip and you can almost detect the sentimental prickling taste of tears».

I leaned my head back on the crutch I should have been holding and it was strangely comfortable. I felt as if I were floating, as if the air were a solid cushion hewn to my shape. Dalí tapped the easel with his pencil like a conductor with a baton and once more I became Apollo. The afternoon was warm. The windows in Cadaqués houses are small like mirrors and light the interiors in lucid drifts of sunlight. My mind wandered. India was receding.

«You have good ears», he said. «Ears are the fingerprints of the face. Eyes and noses are bestowed to us through the genes of one parent. The ears are a blend of both. They are always original. Your ears make question marks. For what are they asking?».

«Knowledge», I said.

«Read Saint Theresa the nun. I love nuns. I love the way they find in their prayers justification for war and want and the slaughter of innocents. It is a true gift».

The Tarot was in the air and The Empress was waiting for a reading.

She was sitting in the hut, studying in the mirror the parchment flesh on which the manuscript of her life had been written. Gala was not of this world. She was a giant spider without fears, feelings or beliefs. She traumatized her prey with the stinging spite of her tongue and the piercing look of her eyes. She was a web of senses and appetites: a sense of her own well-being with an insatiable appetite for luxury and sex. She had reached a sublime state of independence. Her personal art collection made her a wealthy woman and the only tragedy was that she was close to eighty and the time to enjoy it was running out.

She carefully applied her lipstick, a scarlet gash on her quivering, crumbling lips. She turned towards me with a look of quiet amusement. «What shall I do when I grow old?», she said. «Will you still read the cards and promise me a new lover?».

It was irony that saved her. She opened a drawer and, as she removed a black bow, I noticed the drawer was full of black bows,

some still in their plastic wrappers. She clipped the bow into the back of her hair. «Do you know what Coco Chanel told me, Carlos? If you are born without wings, you should do nothing to prevent them growing».

I took my Tarot cards from their blue silk bindings. Gala shuffled the pack three times and, as I slowly turned seven cards into a cosmic wheel, a story of confusion and great passion emerged. It was uncanny. I had no need to invent a new lover. He was there, in the reading. The first card was the Queen of Cups, a dominant woman with royal desires. The last, the most important, was the Page of Cups, symbolizing freedom from responsibility and showing a young man walking in a haze of his own dreams and fantasies. I felt the hair on the back of my neck stand up. «You are going to meet a young man and have the most marvellous liaison», I said.

«So I see».

«He will be very special. Like a God».

Gala turned away and checked her lips once more in the mirror. «Perhaps he will fuck like a God, too», she said crudely, quoting Dalí's favourite joke, the only one I could ever remember. It takes place in a brothel. One whore says to another: Who's the weirdo with the crown of thorns? The second whore replies: I don't know, but he fucks like a God.

«I see happiness but also frustration and anger», I continued.

«*C'est la vie*. Life is a long round of frustration and anger, Carlitos. The happiest day of my life will be the day I die».

She was being melodramatic. Her grievances were unfounded. Gala had led a charmed existence and the enchantment endured with the appearance of the young squire the cards had predicted. The following year at the *St Regis Hotel* in New York she met the Broadway actor Jeff Fenholt, the Jesus of the hit musical *Jesus Christ Superstar*. The performer became her beau and Gala became the goose that laid the golden egg. She had never before paid her gigolos for more than «bed and breakfast», but gave Jeff Fenholt paintings he later sold at Sotheby's for millions of dollars. In her long life, Gala had taken lovers beyond number, but Jesus alone inspired violent quarrels with Dalí.

«When is my new lover going to show up?», she asked.

«Soon», I replied.

She added the final touch to her scarlet lipstick. «Good», she said. «I can't wait to get my teeth into him».

The red roses were a success. Marsha Chase appeared later in the week for a night of pink champagne and the Divine left his throne waving both arms in celebration.

«She is a boooo - ti - ful animal», he screamed and I detected a faint blush emerging under Marsha's suntan. She was in white, very girlish, and seemed to be constantly high on something and that something I would discover was life.

«Are - you - from - Connect - eeee - kut?», he asked her.

«No, New York».

«Really. I - love - Connect - eeee - kut. I had my bestor - gaaa - smmm - ever - in - Connect - eeee - kut...».

His English was a pageant of unruly consonants and divorced diphthongs almost impossible to comprehend. He turned to me with a conspiratorial look. «Violetera, go and turn on the light», he said in French and I climbed over the terraces to illuminate the porcelain sink hidden in the trees. It was the same as the units he was using to embellish the museum and called the garden fixture the *Lavabo Metaphysique*. In the darkness, it took on the appearance of an angel: the pedestal forming the body and the basin a pair of wings.

«Look, Beau Yeaux», he said to Marsha. «It - is - more beau - ti - ful - than - the - moon...». He was all over her, ignoring the other guests, waltzing in circles around the terrace, collapsing finally on the soft beach of the red velvet cushions.

Rosa arrived with a bowl of black olives. Gala vanished with a stray Scottish boy Dalí had instantly christened San Sebastian and Captain Moore prowled through the shadows with a walking cane. He had become Dalí's alter ego: he dressed like him, walked like him, affected his mannerisms. It was a joy to watch. The Captain had even bought a piece of land on the cliffs above Dalí's house in Port Lligat. He built a grand villa like a castle and when he topped off the walls with crenelated battlements Dalí said he was trying to recreate Disneyland. Captain Moore decorated his castle with plaster statues, kitsch lamps with chichi shades made in Figueres and those gaudy religious pictures the peasants hang in their

bedrooms. It was just what Dalí had done in his house but the Magician made it work.

While Dalí was treating Marsha to his repertoire of apocryphal stories and dirty jokes a very strange thing happened. A head kept appearing and disappearing as someone bobbed up and down outside the garden wall. I recognized the face and for a moment thought I was looking at my own double: the same long hair, the same carved cheek bones and dark eyes patterned with memories of India.

The man climbed the wall and approached. Dalí was horrified. This did not happen. People came through the front door. Not over the garden wall. «It's an assassin», he cried and, as the man stopped in his tracks, I realized it was George Harrison.

I rushed over to Dalí. «It's George Harrison», I said.

«Who?».

«George Harrison».

«Who?».

«From the Beatles».

«Beat - el - es? What are Beat - el - es?». He knew perfectly well but was happier pretending.

«The Beatles. From Liverpool, England».

«He wants my moustache and he can't have it», Dalí shrieked and I only understood what he meant when George Harrison told me over lunch at Casa Juan the following day that the Beatles had once paid \$5,000 for a single whisker from the Divine's moustache.

Dalí was still sitting with Marsha and we joined them. «Send for the Captain. The photographers should be here», Dalí said. «Are there more Beat - el - es over the wall?».

George Harrison sat at his side with the expression of a man prepared for anything. In India, I had bought a tamboura, a four-stringed instrument. George put it in tune and played *My Sweet Lord*, his first big hit as a solo performer.

«Arab music», Dalí said.

«Indian», I corrected.

«Arabic», he insisted.

He wagged a stern finger at George Harrison. «Violetera is the Queen of the Hippies. He was the first person to walk around the plaza barefoot», he told him and his expression changed from



playful to serious. «You must adore being so famous», he said breathlessly and George Harrison shrugged.

«It's great at first», he replied. «It's great when you're a little bit famous but the more famous you get the worse it becomes».

«I love being famous. It brings me to a state of grace and provides me with celestial orgasms. I prayed that I would become the best painter and the most famous man in the world and my prayers have been answered. I am more famous than the Beat - el - es and more handsome. When the Beat - el - es are forgotten every - one will remember Dalí».

He began to get excited asking questions about groupies which he eagerly resolved himself. George did his best to avoid the subject and left early with Marsha.

«Diana has found her prey», the Divine said. «You must go and find Mrs Morse and ask her to give me a sleeping pill. Tonight the roar of the sewing machine is going to keep the whole village awake».

## *The English*

The slow trains took me back again to the Himalayas and my life became a facsimile of the Divine's yearly cycle. As he moved with unswerving ritual between Cadaqués, Paris and New York, I began to wander the isosceles triangle that joins Cadaqués, Paris and India.

Dalí had made a thorough study of Oriental philosophy and had concluded that the mystics of the East had merely «burrowed in the same holes» as Christian saints. «Religion grows from man's awareness of his impotence. He is nothing. He is afraid of being nothing and raises up idols to endow cruel reality with meaning. Religion is the dust that permeates a dead man's penis and in worshipping their icons you are taking that rotting piece of withered putrescence into your mouth and sucking it».

He had drawn breath to savour the image. «Cristo is merely a form of Krishna. Mary the Virgin Mother is another version of the Greek Aphrodite: Isis to the Egyptians; Venus to the Romans. All religions start at the same point and take the same blind and constipated path to a heaven that does not exist».

He had assured readers of *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, his autobiography published in 1942, that his entire existence had been devoted to the search for heaven. «Through the density of the confused and demoniac flesh of my life I have been seeking heaven! The first time I saw a woman's depilated armpit I was seeking heaven. When with my crutch I stirred the putrefied and worm-eaten mass of a dead hedgehog, it was heaven I was seeking». He ends his memoirs with the words: «At this moment I do not yet have faith, and I fear I shall die without heaven».

It was pure Dalí. He was a devout atheist. His Christian rantings and paintings were the crotchets and quavers of the musical score

to his own surreal opera. He delighted in the trappings of Catholicism: the bishops in sinful finery; the paintings by Goya and El Greco. He relished the sight of penitents with bloody wounds as they followed the crucifix on their hands and knees during holy week; he adored the idea of young girls in convents whipping their backs raw to rid their minds of carnal thoughts. It was one grand and glorious joke. «I practise but do not believe», he would say. «You are born with nothing and the first thing they want to do is take something away from you: the prerogative of independent thought».

*Kama* in Sanskrit means desire and desire in Catalan is Dalí. He was the demon on my shoulder murmuring messages that echoed in my mind as I plunged once more into the routine at the ashram: meditation, reading, walking the paths that coil around lakes where *sadhus* performed their ablutions. India is different. It disdains generalizations. It has unfamiliar strengths. Like the willow that bears the weight of the snow all winter and bounces back in the thaw, India bends without breaking. It endures. It touches you like wisdom and wrinkles. When, after a prolonged stay in India, you meet others who have made the same journey, there is a special but wordless understanding.

My friends at the ashram were purifying themselves through the sentiment of love and, immediately after my return, Dalí's games stayed with me like a stone in my shoe. Dalí was not a willow. He was an oak tree supporting drifts of snow in the rigid confines of paranoia-critica. The age he had mastered and manipulated was passing. Change was drawing nearer.

I was another year older and still needed a crutch on which to lean. It is awful to have to make such an admission but true; true of almost everyone: wives with husbands; sons with their mother; the forgotten actor with his photographs and newspaper clippings. I needed to be flattered and, purring with content, I would be the most sympathetic and charming companion. I thrived under the influence of a paternal mentor and felt reassured exchanging Dalí's guidance for that of another charismatic instructor: Richard Alpert, the former Harvard professor who had renamed himself Baba Ram Dass and was now Guru Neem Karoli's best known disciple.

It was at Harvard that Richard Alpert and his associate Timothy

Leary had invented the Cool Aid Acid Test, the legendary experiments with LSD where the devotee taking the hallucinogenic trip is suspended in total darkness in a tank of warm water. You are, in this state, alone with nothing but your thoughts.

Richard Alpert had been excommunicated from the academic world and had become a messianic figure to the Flower Power generation flocking to India. He led pilgrimages to Rishikesh, where we lived among a colony of lepers. With a million others, we took part in the puja at Allahabad held every four years when the full moon is in line with the other planets. We travelled to Bodh Gaya, where the Buddha had become enlightened. The Dalai Lama, the reincarnated leader of the Tibetan people, gave a series of talks and the rites I learned in 1973 formed the essence of the prayers I would whisper at Dalí's surreal funeral.

The Living Theater rebel Rufus Collins was working on his theatrical concept and is working on it still as far as I know. There was no hurry in India. Time ceases to be finite, a theoretical but dissolving mass. Each succeeding rebirth presents new challenges and, in the fullness of eternity, we would be all things and perceive everything. They say in India when you need a teacher he appears. When you are ready for knowledge you understand. The blank canvas of my being had been coloured by Salvador Dalí and Baba Ram Dass sketched new lines of intricate detail. I had exchanged one crutch for another, and it came as a cruel shock when that crutch was brutally yanked away.

One cold morning when the *sadhus* were breaking the ice on the lakes to take their baths, Ram Dass inexplicably freaked out. He began to scream and kick things. He ran in circles, splashing through the puddles, howling obscenities. «Don't look at me as your teacher. I am not a teacher. There are no teachers». It was his final teaching. Ram Dass transmogrified back again to Richard Alpert and disappeared. We were left floundering like clubbed seals, and when my comrades from the Living Theater revived from the blow they decided it was time to leave India. The Baba had taught his followers to tune in, turn on, and drop out. My friends were homesick. They needed to tune in, turn on, and drop out of life at the ashram for a spell of Ma's American home-cooking.

I would have gone with them but the Green Card that had given

me the coveted privilege of residency in the United States had expired and I was afraid my name was at the top of the most wanted list. In 1969, shortly after I had left for San Francisco, draft papers had arrived for me in Los Angeles. I was a sincere pacifist. A vegetarian. I loathed uniforms. There had never been any question of my going to Vietnam and four years later, in 1973, even while the Americans were pulling out of Indochina, I was unsure of my position and terrified of being sent to prison, an angel with severed wings.

I made my way on the third class trains and crowded buses back to France. It cost less than \$50 to make the one-way journey between India and Europe in those days and that was about all I had. I would have starved, or followed George Orwell's footsteps into the kitchens along the rue de Rivoli, but was fortunate to find work in a new play being cast by Bertrand Castelli, the director who had given me the role in *Hair*.

The piece was called *La Noce* and its first run was at *La Palais Bier* in Lille, a beer hall that had everything except chicken wire across the stage. While we were doing our thing on the boards, the waiters were clumping in and out with trays of food, slamming doors; the customers were eating and calling for beer; fighting; dropping things. One night, four gendarmes with capes flapping appeared blowing whistles and arrested two men with moustaches and a beautiful woman hiding a machine-gun under her raincoat. It was insanity. And it was art. We had entered that romantic, post-hippie era where writers were experimenting with ideas for bringing social and political awareness to the people from the bounteous fount of culture, a resourceful if patronizing vision. We may just as well have been performing before chimpanzees at feeding time in the zoo.

I fled to Paris and the devouring déjà vu of dancing once more in *Hair*. It was just too strange punching my time card in and out at the *Theatre Porte Saint Martin* and, with that odd sense of fatalism India inspires, I quit again. I worked as a fashion model, then, through one of those quirky turns in destiny, I found myself in a suite of rooms occupied by the English painter David Hockney. The apartment belonged to Marlon Brando and looked over *Le Precope*, Voltaire's favourite café on the rue de l'Ancienne-Comédie. Men

took their mistresses there for cocktails and I watched them parting with careless kisses before they hurried home to their wives.

The room David used as a studio was serene and silent. The light creeping in over the rooftops was shadowy and sensuous. Pigeons strutted by like guardsmen on the iron balconies and, in those cold winter weeks, we became close friends.

We had been introduced by the Contessa Lila di Nobili, an adorable Romanian who wandered the streets in long black gowns and tennis shoes. Her complexion was as pale as the moon over the Seine and her eyes were lit by Balkan mystery. She always carried a basket full of titbits for her troupe of cats and was perpetually rushing off in order to feed them. The cats ruled her life and conspired to prevent her from working. She had designed clothes for Maria Callas, and movie sets for Visconti and Zeffirelli. She had been a teacher of art and was a talented painter whose solitary exhibition in New York had been a sell-out, exciting the critics and astonishing the public, a rare correlation of dreams and reality. La Contessa told us she had indulged in the sexual act only once in her life. «The ordeal was impossibly painful», she declared with theatrical gusto and I thought of Salvador Dalí with García Lorca, with Gala, with me.

She hurried off with her basket of scraps. David opened a bottle of *Bourgogne* rouge. «You can't stay in balance without physical love», he said.

«That's why Lila's so eccentric», I replied.

I felt contented, me modelling, David drawing. It took so little to make me happy. A glass of wine, warm friends, the sun setting in pastel hues. We worked in the gentle glow of the afternoon and went out at night to lots of parties. Marlon Brando had just made *Last Tango in Paris* and was being seen everywhere carrying a block of butter and wearing the fatigued look of a man for whom life denies nothing. Maria Schneider, the film's co-star, would be occupying some quiet corner in clinging leather like an advertisement for S. & M. We would dance in the plaza when she turned up a year later in Cadaqués. I took her to Port Lligat for pink champagne and the Divine guided her through the labyrinth with his lecture on angel's wings. She was *très érotique* and he was delighted with this unexpected gift.

One night I bumped into Keith Richards. «Hey, you son of a bitch, you've stolen my fucking coat», he said, grabbing me by the lapels. «What the fuck's going on?».

Having carried my embroidered sheepskin through the fiery heat of Afghanistan, I was destroyed finding the guitarist from the Rolling Stones with the identical coat draped around the shoulders of his companion, the model Patti Boyd.

«It's here, sweet», she said and Keith Richards looked at his coat, looked at my coat, then looked at me with a fierce expression. «That's all right, then», he said.

Patti Boyd was married to George Harrison at the time and I was going to ask her how he was but didn't dare. Other Stones were rolling around the room. Bottles were being knocked over and a girl had fallen from the window. Clouds of marijuana hung in dense drifts over speakers pounding out psychedelic music; LSD spiked the bowl of punch circulating the room. Some starlets had taken their clothes off and behind the drapes two people were dancing with clandestine urgency. It was a normal party and I was happy to leave with David. We took a taxi to Bastille and descended into the pit at the *Perroquet Rouge*.

Dalí said the English had been consistent in contributing nothing to art during the Renaissance and by making the same contribution in the contemporary era. In company with Francis Bacon and Richard Hamilton, David Hockney was among the group who made nonsense of the generalization. David had just been honoured with an award at the Musée des Arts Decoratifs and was engaged in designing sets for the new Glyndebourne production of *The Rake's Progress*. David chose the prettiest colours on the palette and his drawings were gorgeous. «I believe in the primacy of drawing as the ground base for fine art», he once remarked and Dalí had often said the same thing.

It is quite remarkable, but highly gifted men are always attractive. David was a jewel, gentle and good-looking; an exceptional man —and not merely as a painter. The incident with Keith Richards had been less surprising than characteristic. I had met many English people on my travels and had discovered in the recesses of their renowned civility a tense and terrible violence.

«Why?», I asked.

David answered without hesitation. «It's the class system», he said. «No one is quite sure who they are or what they are or how to behave. It makes us all edgy. The best English people always live outside England. Now I've got out, I'll never go back».



## *Hostessing*

The days grew longer and my senses were brushed by a troubling if intangible nostalgia. Sitting quietly one afternoon in David's studio, my eyes were drawn to the pool of light around the disused potter's wheel and I saw myself as a lump of unworked clay. India was the wheel that had shaped me and the heat of the long Spanish summers was the kiln that would fire me into something fine and permanent.

Dalí appeared in April. It was 1974 and hard to believe five years had gone by since our first date. He called and I rushed immediately to the *Hôtel Meurice*.

«How do I look?», He was standing in the bedroom studying himself in the mirror.

«*Guapo*», I replied.

«I know. We are all blessed with distinctive attributes. Yours is to be my consul in Cadaqués», he said and in his voice I detected the gratified ring of victory. He had defeated India. «You can find out what everyone is saying about me and you can bring amusing guests to Port Lligat». I had Marsha Chase and Samantha Eggar to thank and censure for the proposal.

He combed his hair and twirled his moustache. «Today I am going to take you to the Louvre», he announced. He turned to look me up and down. «You're thinner. You must wear black. Black will make you appear as thin as the sticks of liquorice I used to devour so I could blacken my teeth and terrify my sister. You should wear black with a touch of red, blood and death: the colours of anarchy. You seem unduly pleased with yourself, *Violetera*. You must be spending a lot of time at the sewing machine. Tell me who with?».

«Certainly not», I replied.

«I'll find out. I always do».

We passed out of the *Meurice* into a waiting car. «It is time you learned about art and the first thing to study is the work of the worst painter of all time: Monsieur Cézanne. A marvellous individual. A criminal. He has done more to destroy the common man's perception of art than anyone. It is an exceptional accomplishment».

A curator was waiting for us at the museum. He was tanned and athletic and turned livid as he listened to the Divine. «Cézanne is a charlatan. His work is spurious and incompetent. It is re - pug - nan - te. The teachers will tell us Cézanne wanted to change his perspectives and painted everything bent and misshapen by design. They are wrong. Teachers are always wrong. Cézanne's apples and tables are not misshapen because he planned it that way. No, no, no, no, no. They are misshapen because he was unable to paint any other way. He was a hopeless draughtsman and bad painter».

The curator went to speak but Dalí stopped him. He stabbed the man's chest with a long thin finger, the nail none too clean. «Did you know, when Cézanne's mother died he had to call in another artist to make a drawing of her on her deathbed?», he said, his eyes popping. «Now, if you want to look at the work of a great French painter, I would find it a pleasure to show you», and he led the way at a jog to the Louvre's modest collection of Meissonier.

«Meissonier is hardly credited as being great among the critics», the curator said haughtily.

Dalí laughed and did a little dance, tapping his cane and going up and down on his toes. «The critics? The critics?», he cried. «The critics are always wrong and they are wrong like the teachers and professors because they want to be artists and they are born without talent. The greatest tragedy in life is to be born a critic and art critics are the worst. Do you know what Monsieur Duchamp said about critics?».

«Yes, as a matter of fact I do», the curator replied.

«Then you must enlighten me. I have completely forgotten».

We had lunch at the *Closerie des Lilas* to mark our fifth anniversary and ordered sardines. He never forgot anything and, like Antoni Gaudí, he had an eye for the most trifling detail. He had studied the various techniques in memory recall developed by the Italian scholar Bruno Giordano, who believed everything that happened in

life was recorded in a memory file. «You receive it all like a camera and the trick is to get the film developed», Dalí said and he began to show off by reciting poetry and nursery rhymes he had learned as a boy.

He taught me a method for recalling what people said at a dinner party. You begin by remembering who was there, where they were sitting and what everyone was wearing. You then move on to the decor of the room, the lighting and ambience. As the picture becomes clear, the words that were said shuffle into place and whole conversations are summoned to mind with little difficulty. «To be a success in society you need the retention of a Xerox machine». He wiped oil from his cheeks with a pink napkin and tapped the side of his head. «The doors of success are heavy and hard to push open. Do you want to be a success, Carlitos?». Five years in real time had gone by but Dalí stretched time and made it all sound so fresh, a fresh camembert.

I smiled. «Of course I do».

«Then you must analyze Meissonier».

«Not Cézanne?».

«Study Cézanne if you want to know how not to paint and study Meissonier if you want to learn about painting».

Dalí's teas and occasional orgies in salons filled with tuberoses occupied the days. We made visits to galleries and museums and, when he left for Spain in June, I went with him. I said farewell to David Hockney. I kissed him on both cheeks and took the train from the Gare de Lyon to Figueres.

Arturo drove us over the hills and as I saw the first glimpse of the sea I felt as if I were arriving home. I smiled and the Divine dug me in the ribs with a sharp elbow. «You have found your spot, Carlitos», he said. «Everyone is drawn back to Cadaqués», and as the years unfolded I would find how true his words had been. Mstislav Rostropovich came to play the cello at a concert in the church. Nicholas Tuffnel, the tall handsome Etonian, as tall and as handsome as ever, showed up with a beautiful wife as beautiful as the myriad Ginestas who had passed through the court. The playwright Julia Parr appeared with the producer Judith Hibberd and Vernon Gudgeon, the actor who had played the Divine in Miss Parr's London opening of *Gala/Dalí*. He walked like him; talked like

him; mimicked his movements. It was scary. Did it only take a competent performer to play Dalí? The surrealist photographer Man Ray surfaced each summer. Rufus Collins, the actor, Jean Levy, widow of Julien the dealer, Marsha Chase, writing poetry, George Harrison, still growing his hair—all have wandered once more across the plaza with cloudy eyes and the vague expressions of people searching for some lost and valuable object. Pandora showed her eerie paintings at the *Galería Carlos Lozano* and Roberta Dominguez, the Mexican wife of Alexander Salkind, came to celebrate the fruitful end to her long project to film *The Rainbow Thief*. Dear Roberta.

We both burst into laughter when we saw each other because there is something inexplicably funny being a native South American and coming face to face with another Indian. We are the survivors from the colonial zeal of the Conquistadors and Pilgrim Fathers. We are a reminder of an older, more civilized time. We should not be here and we still are.

Cadaqués is indisputably, temperamentally different. It is cut off from the rest of Spain, isolated on a peninsula at the end of a savage spiral of roads that look over valleys where the carcasses of dead motor cars dwell. The village is all but surrounded by the sea. It is like an island but not an island. Once you are there it is hard to leave. Monte Negra and the Pani rise up to form the grey shoulders of an immense sculpture with the church sitting on the skyline between them like an extinct and patient animal. During the Civil War, an anarchist militiaman severed the arm from a wooden fisherman carved into the church's baroque altar. The following day, a group of men from the pueblo abducted the militiaman—a Republican compatriot—and cut off his arm with a carpenter's saw. Vengeance is inevitable; memories are long. The fishermen still spit when they pass the fascist bar where Franco stares from the wall and Captain Moore used to take his morning coffee with the guardias civiles. Widows scan the horizon for the ghost of Barbarossa. First cousins, even brothers and sisters, have mingled their blood in intermarriage to breed a derangement adored by Dalí under a sky that enchants artists, writers and runaways from all over the world. In Cadaqués people live out their fantasies. They aspire to be what they are not. There is a magical quality, a

vibration that reminds me of the desert. It is barren, untamed, melancholic, and home.

I found some rooms close to the church and the French explorer Michel Peissel said I should rent a house for a year and sub-let it in August to pay a year's rent. It was an astute plan but, like Dalí, I had no understanding of business and no Gala to arrange such miracles. Michel was writing a book on Zanskar or Mustang, some lost kingdom in the Himalayas he had ventured through at the head of an expedition. Once he got an idea, he stuck with it until he had achieved his goal; an enviable, Dalínian quality. In the spring of 1995, with Sebastian Guinness, Michel discovered the source of the Mekong, a feat acclaimed by the Royal Geographical Society of London and celebrated with plenty of champagne all through that long hot summer.

That summer, twenty years ago, I swam every morning and made myself busy with the daily timetable: pink champagne and the quest of bringing guests to the house, young people I had met in the bars and cafés. I was assuming a role, so slowly, like aging, I was unaware of it. I called my task screening, or configuration; ambassadorial. Never procuring.

«You are my hostess», he would say and I would light the *Lavabo Metaphysique* in order for the Divine to tell his audience that the porcelain glow was more beautiful than the moon. Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* or *Tristan und Isolde* would be scratching its way over the background whisper of the sea and the Magician would escort some cute boy to his studio to indulge in acts that now seem almost innocent. Dalí had stopped touching anyone. His great pleasure was in persuading boys to drop their pants and then watching them masturbate. He no longer masturbated himself. He had claimed he was impotent when it was not true and now, through the mental chicanery of paranoia-critica, he had made it true. He believed impotence diverted sexual energy into artistic mastery and what he desired most was to be considered among the ranks of the old masters. «It is thanks to Gala that Dalí is the only living genius of our time except Picasso and I shall outlive him».

In July, we sent his old adversary the annual postcard: «Picasso: In July neither women nor snails». The routine was *de rigueur*: the same champagne, the same music and stories, the same mutual

games of seduction, the Divine engaged solely in trying to inspire the boys to take their clothes off and the boys scheming with youthful greed to leave Port Lligat with a drawing, a dream that only came true for Jesus Christ Superstar. Gala was girlishly in love with her Broadway song and dance man, not that it curbed her promiscuity. On the nights when Amanda Lear was also in town, it was a joy to watch the three of them competing for the passing affections of the prettiest boy present: a homosexual, a transsexual and a crumbling nymphomaniac.

My responsibility as the hostess was to squire the young and ravishing to the enchanted garden to supplement the protean circle of painters, writers, rock stars, dilettanti, debauchees and barefoot contessas; the beautiful people. We were all beautiful and Dalí's soirées were a shop window filled with ill-defined and limitless promise. No one knew who they might meet, what deals might be struck, what ghastly frog concealed a handsome prince. One night, I invited two little hippie girls who had been hitch-hiking around Europe with back packs and at first light they sailed away with the Catalan tycoon Ricardo Sicre on his cruise yacht *Pyros Opus*. I received postcards from them for months after from romantic ports around the Mediterranean and still to this day I receive letters from people who remember those nights made magical by the Divine. I lured the young travellers into the Maestro's web and the chosen one nominated to be immortalized naked in pen and ink was always thrilled.

I was also expected to conjure up guests for any transient whim. «Bring me a Russian», Gala would say and I would sweep through the village in search of someone who shared her mother tongue. It was a grand success when I arrived with the architect Ivan Chermayeff, but more often it was a dismal failure and I would know I had failed by the pained look that flashed across Dalí's face.

On one occasion, at the suggestion of Brooks Baekeland, scion of the Bakelite fortune, I took María Frias, a Brazilian diplomat, a fascinating and worldly woman engaged in writing her memoirs. She had just retired from a distinguished career and had many friends in common with Dalí. «But she's old», he said. «Old...».

«She had an affair with John Kennedy», I told him.

«Everyone had an affair with John Kennedy. Even Dalí had an

affair with John Kennedy». His expression turned benign as the woman approached across the garden. «Of course, in the United States anyone can become President and that is the problem. Anyone does», he said in greeting. She smiled and he continued: «Being a diplomat you must have made many trips around - the - world».

María Frias was younger than Dalí but the older Dalí got the less years he wanted in his playmates. «I need *carne fresca*, Carlitos. I must have *car - ne fres - ca...*». and his eyes doubled in size the night a flock of young Guinnesses descended with Sue and Jonathan from their hermitage in the hills.

Sebastian Guinness was fourteen with lots of hair and a strong nose Dalí admired. He christened him San Sebastian, naturally, and his guest listened with a cheeky expression as Dalí recounted the story of the San Sebastian, the Roman Legionnaire who had given up molesting the young soldiers under his command to become a Christian. «As Christianity is far more dangerous than buggery, they had to kill him and, when they did, they knew by his gratified smile he must be a saint», Dalí said. The Legionnaire was duly canonized and became special to Cadaqués in the eighteenth century when, after praying for his divine intervention, the little fishing community was delivered from a cholera epidemic. On the 20th of January each year, the day of San Sebastian, the village people make a pilgrimage to the hermitage and, following a service in the chapel, Sue Guinness, now Lady Moyne, opens her home to the multitudes.

«San Sebastian was handsome, witty and brilliant, a true hedonist who loved life so much it needed fifty arrows to kill him. Only the most comely young men merit the name Sebastian», Dalí said and, as Sebastian passed through the throng, staying cautiously out of the reach of *El Capitán*, who had once boxed his ears just for the fun of it, the Divine's attention shifted to Valentine, his older brother. Valentine was seventeen, still at Eton and far too attractive. Gala had tried to get her claws into him first but, the moment her guard was down, Dalí hurried him through the maze of paths that wound into the olive groves and my palms broke into a sweat.

It was an Act of God that no one ever left Port Lligat angry or offended. Dalí spoke only of sex and sodomy; farting and

putrefaction. He created an atmosphere of intrigue and perversion. He encouraged rumours that there were orgies every night although our orgies were scarce and he normally found simple pleasure merely in tempting and taunting the quarry. Dalí knew instinctively who had come prepared to take their clothes off and who expected to keep them on. For all his apparent madness, there were set frontiers he never crossed and seducing Valentine Guinness was way over the border. I considered following them at a discreet distance but changed my mind. I was Dalí's hostess. Not a policeman.

They returned after a short while and I was relieved. «What happened? Did he... you know...».

Valentine shook his head. «Oh, no, nothing like that. He wanted to know about the Sex Pistols», he replied.

«Sex Pistols?».

«The rock band. He wanted to know if it were true that they peed on stage».

«Do they?».

«Of course», Valentine smiled. «Dalí spoke to me in French all the way round the garden and I couldn't understand a word he was saying. Then, he wanted to talk about the punk scene in London and started asking me questions in perfect English».

We were in the lower garden and watched as Gala disembarked in her black and yellow rowing boat with a new beau straining over the oars. The night was warm. Gala in her mink coat had become a surrealist object, the bow on the back of her head like a pair of horns in the gathering darkness. Someone was playing the guitar and Jonathan Guinness was singing a Bob Dylan song. The nightingales joined in and I hunted through the shadows for a glimpse of Saint Francis of Assisi. The boat slipped behind the curve of the Rateta, the small island shaped like a little mouse in the mouth of the bay.

«Where are they going?», Valentine asked.

«Lobster hunting», I replied.

Amanda joined us, took a close look at Valentine, and left again. He was too young. Amanda's mission had been to enter the English aristocracy by marrying a Guinness. She had spent years trying to woo Jasper, a skilful cricketer, and when he escaped to grow olives



in Tuscany, she pursued him with one final and convoluted ploy. She had become a singer and he went to see her show in Florence. The concert halls on her tour were filled with voyeurs titillated by the thrill of watching a boy-girl on stage, although her act was rather tame. All she did was look sexy, move sexily and sing like Marlene Dietrich.

After the show she met Jasper for a candlelit supper. «Now, what's this I hear about you wanting to marry me?», she asked and, as Jasper later declared, he was speechless. He fled back to the olive groves and Amanda Lear settled for matrimony with Alain Philippe, the Marquis Malagnac d'Argens, a Frenchman.

One year, Dalí took Amanda to Baron Alexis de Rédé's *bal de masque* costumed as an opium poppy in black thigh boots and a red leotard with one exposed breast like a finger poking fun at the bourgeois angst hidden at the heart of Paris society. Dalí found infinite pleasure in mocking middle-class hypocrisy and did so on behalf of everyone who followed the light of a different star. We lived on the bright and often dangerous fringes of their dull, grey and ordered world and occasionally paid the price for being exotic in pogroms and in prison cells.

The bourgeoisie was an unyielding enemy and our only retaliation was in finding success as painters, writers, performers, in antiques, as entrepreneurs, success at anything and at any cost. Amanda was a success for us all. When she returned to Cadaqués after her tour she gave me a copy of her first record album. It was called *Sweet Revenge*.

I'm sure it wasn't Amanda who inspired Valentine to go into the music business, although on the interlacing web of paranoia-critica, anything's possible. He calls the band *Darling*, and Dalí would certainly have had something wicked to say about that.

## *The Opening*

At the end of July, we went to Granollers, an industrial town outside Barcelona, where Juan Ilya had organized a happening, a night of action painting that may have been common in London and New York, but was still a novelty in Franco's Spain. As everyone was ornamenting themselves in the most scandalous manner, Dalí went in a dark undertaker's suit. He had dressed me in baggy harem pants, shoes with curling pointed toes, a white silk shirt, and a mask made from a top hat with the face of the Mona Lisa crushed between two other faces. It was a huge success and the mask now lodges at the *Teatro Museo*.

The Chinese designer Kai Tsik Wong had arrived from San Francisco with a film director and an entourage of the Red Guard clad in brilliant garments decorated with giant insects. There were pre-Raphaelite girls with sharp bones and twelve-inch fingernails. There was a dwarf Dalí kissed. There were men in drag, in masks, in tall pointed hats. «Boys will be girls», he sang and we threw cans of paint at huge canvases with abandon.

Granollers had joined the modern world. There was dancing in the streets, rebellion in the air and paint everywhere and on everyone except Dalí. Camera bulbs kept flashing and the Divine tried not to smile. «I adore photographs. Photographs allow you to live twice».

«I hate photographs».

«Indians are superstitious», he said and strode into the *Europa Hotel* to a fusillade of popping champagne corks. He went out on to the balcony to play Mussolini.

Dalí held dictators in high esteem because in them he found something humorous and absurd. He admired Franco's dainty steps and small white hands. He liked Hitler and watched old newsreels

of the monster to enjoy his rodent-like movements and ridiculous moustache. He praised Mussolini for the swagger in his walk and his unique ability to pump himself up like a blowfish. His admiration was in no sense political. Dalí was a monarchist and, with the logic of paranoia-critica, an anarchist; never a fascist nor a communist. «*Picasso es un comunista y yo tampoco*», he once said with a mocking play on words: Picasso is a communist and me neither.

He puffed out his belly and waved his stick at the crowd below the balcony. «You have all been nourished intellectually and spiritually by the fertilizing generosity of my poetic inventions. I am a masochist drawing painful and exquisite delight from the mountain ranges of my polymorphous activity. Sealed in the anagram of my noble countenance is a peasant like you who works seventeen hours a day», he screamed, banging his fists, the crowd roaring for more. «Work, work, and more work. There is nothing in a man's life that can explain his genius and nothing in his genius that explains his life. Work hard like good Catalans. Be patient and guard these two pieces of wisdom: Never forgive and never trust anyone».

He made a triumphal exit through the massed throng with me in his wake and we stepped into the Cadillac. Arturo pulled away and we sat there in silence, just the two of us, reflecting on the events of the evening. Then he turned to look at me. I had taken the mask off. «You are sensitive and you feel that I make you more sensitive, more receptive. Is this true?», he asked.

«Yes», I gasped.

«I know what people are thinking by studying their faces, Violetera. I can read their thoughts by the turn of the nose, the twist of a cheekbone, the gleam of light in their eyes. I am a morphologist», he said and he squeezed my arm. «Are you happier now you have stopped sucking that putrid piece of dead man's putrescence?».

I had to think for a moment. His memory was better than mine. «I am happy to be with you. But I was also happy in India», I replied.

«You are playing the saint and saints are the creation of the Devil», he said.

He leaned over to Arturo and told him to make a detour to Sitges, another small town along the coast from Barcelona. We dined on lobster at one of the outdoor restaurants beside the harbour, the church lit up on a bluff of rock, milky white in the darkness. We were like a mirage for the people sitting at the surrounding tables and they stared at us as if the vision might shudder and disappear.

We walked around the church and stopped to stare out at the sea. «This is where I brought Gala for our honeymoon», he said. «It was a test. I knew if she had liked Sitges more than Cadaqués our union would be cursed».

He was unusually revealing that night and as he spoke I had no idea if he were being open to release something of himself into my safekeeping, or if his words were a joke, a trick, a trap. No one ever, at any time, under any circumstances, knew what Dalí was thinking; what rocks might lurk in the sea of his cunning. He was never natural.

Arturo dropped us back in the centre of town and we walked arm in arm along Calle del Picado —the street of sin full of bars owned by old queens who had given up show business to retire to the seaside. Each one was decorated in the identical manner with publicity shots of the owners, the photographs taken years before at forgotten variety halls. We went to each bar in turn. Dalí would swing the door open and everyone would scream with delight as he made his entrance. He would bow and circle the room like a prince visiting a hospital ward, shaking hands, admiring hair cuts and clothes, talking nonsense and making everyone laugh. It was a spectacle. It was like the coming of the Gay Pope and he gave the same sermon everywhere we went. It was the story of a man sitting in a café boasting that the previous night he'd had sex seventeen times. The men in the café were so scornful of the boaster's claims he became enraged. «There is a seed of truth in every exaggeration», he cried. «My sister lives in the apartment above me. She's a whore and she had sex seventeen times last night». The audience would weep with laughter and we would move on to the next bar with the identical routine. When he had a new joke, he would tell it a million times.

We ended the evening back in Barcelona at the *Elefante Blanco*, a

transvestite night club with the usual collection of stage acts and habitués who looked as if they had slipped from the pen of Aubrey Beardsley. While Dalí told his smutty story, I sat there in the centre of my own little cosmos. My Mars is in Leo. I have that leonine fire in social situations. I can walk into a bar with a certain magnetism that attracts people, something the Divine appreciated and puzzled over. People with this power —politicians, actors, Salvador Dalí— use it to manipulate others, but India had ruined me for all that. We are what we do.

We stayed at the *Hotel Ritz* for two days with Louis XIV and Amanda Lear. We had lunch and dinner at the *Via Veneto* and suddenly it was Sunday and on Sunday in Spain there is a time-honoured tradition: church, the bullfight and the brothel.

We skipped church and were ushered into the best box at the *plaza de toros* in Barcelona. There was a smell of jasmine that mingled with the heat and the dust. Dalí was eating *churros*, fingers of fried dough dipped in chocolate. Amanda sat on his right, carefully dressed so as to appear careless, the woman every woman envied, even Louis XIV, who sat on the Divine's left in a wide-brimmed hat that cast her face half in shadow, like the bullring. We were in the shade and, after the ceremonial parade of the *toreros*, the first of the six bulls emerged, steaming and furious in the brilliant sunlight.

From the day the bull had drawn its first breath it had been nurtured with infinite care. It had always had the best food, the best pastures, the prettiest cows. Now, to the bull's utter bewilderment, two picadors on padded horses were attacking it with lances. I was sitting behind Dalí with a box of water colours and a small pad painting landscapes Dalí condemned as atrocious.

«They're protest paintings», I said.

«A pro - test!», he exclaimed.

«The children hate the bullfight», Louis XIV told him, referring to Amanda and me.

«Is this true?», Dalí demanded.

«Yes», I said.

«Yes», Amanda agreed. «The bull is put through so much unnecessary suffering».

«Suffering is good for the soul. It is a known fact, when bulls put

up a good fight in the ring, they are reborn as Catalans».

The King laughed and the first contest came to an end. The bull, struck down by the matador's sword, was towed from the ring by two black horses. «There is no dignity dragging the bull out in this way. The bull is a star. A helicopter should descend and take the bull up and up».

Dalí was very pleased to have his little court around him and even more pleased to fan the undercurrents of dissent. «There is nothing like the smell of death. It is better than the smell of a virgin. It makes the sap rise. I can feel even now the tender beginning of a tiny erection. Death in the dust. It is glorious».

«It's revolting», Amanda said.

«Hateful», I added.

«No, no, no. It is a love affair. The bullfighter loves the bull with a love all the more intense because its consummation ends in death».

The second matador was very tall, very dark and very handsome. Dalí was thrilled. «We will ask them back to the *Ritz* so you can seduce them, little one», he said to Amanda and she squirmed in her seat. «Look, he is like a butterfly, a boooo - ter - fli - eeee. The bull's horns are phallic. He has two giant limousines trying to poke the matador in his most sensitive parts».

The suit the matador wears is called the *traje de luz*, the suit of light, and is so tight from the waist down he may just as well be naked. After Dalí described the matador as a butterfly, the man transformed into a butterfly. He made the pass known as the *verónica*, thrusting his lightly clad manliness to within inches of the bull's sharp horns. The bull charged through the matador's vanishing cape, wheeled around in a spiral of dust and raised its head to roar at the screaming crowd. With blood in its eyes, its head dropped and it trotted back to a place in the shade to draw breath. I had noticed the injured bulls always returned to the same position. I commented on this, casually, without making a direct question, which would only have been cretinized.

«It is called *la querencia*. It is the animal's stamping station, the place where he feels the most secure and the most confident», Dalí said «You are a *toro*, Carlitos. Cadaqués is your *querencia*».

The six bulls in turn chose their places of safety and in turn they

were slaughtered by the three matadors; two each. When a matador makes a particularly spectacular kill, the president of the *corrida* allows him the privilege of severing one of the bull's ears and presenting it to someone in the crowd, usually a beautiful woman. The tall dark bullfighter, after his second confrontation, was granted this honour and presented the ragged ear to Dalí. Everyone stood cheering and the *toreros* threw their hats in the air.

The three matadors accepted Dalí's invitation and appeared at his suite at the *Ritz* later that evening. Louis XIV had left for a dinner party and Amanda had spent three hours on her toilette. The end result was a vision of purity which I captured with a Polaroid. «That should do it», she said and she moved among the matadors like a net among butterflies. The lights were low; flamenco music played on the stereo. Dalí spoke of his plan to have the bulls lifted from the bullring by helicopter and the bullfighters politely laughed. He was staring intently at the chandelier in the middle of the ceiling. «Have you seen my bathroom? I must show you. There is a naked boy taking a bath», and the three men followed him into the pink marble bathroom.

There was no one there and Dalí acted shocked. «Where is he? Where has he gone? What have you done with him?», he cried and he ran around searching under the towels, behind the curtains, at the back of the bidet. «Violetera», he screamed. «What have you done with that little boy?».

«He left», I replied, playing the game.

«Left? Left? He left? Didn't you tell him we had guests? Have you gone mad? What are the *toreros* going to do? They came here to see a boy in the bath».

The bullfighters smiled, unsure of themselves, and I plied them with more champagne. Dalí continued to look under the towels for the invented boy. He found a metal comb and began chipping at the plaster between the ornate tiles. Then, he seized the plug and dangled it helplessly on the end of its chain. I plugged the bath and turned on the water.

«I will not let people down. It has been a policy all through my life. I care. I care. I care about people. I will not let them down. They came here to see a beautiful boy and they will just have to make do with a beautiful girl».

His eyes fell on Amanda. She threw her mane of hair from side to side and dropped one of the straps to her little black dress. I refilled the glasses and the bullfighters gulped their champagne. Amanda was just as slow taking her dress off as she had been putting it on. First one strap, then the next. She wriggled and the dress fell in a black puddle at her feet. Her red lips were pursed in a bow. She fiddled with her slip, unsnapped the clasps on her skimpy suspender-belt and, bending from the waist, unrolled her stockings and slipped out of her shoes. I turned the water off. The bathroom was full of steam. Amanda removed the black postage-stamp of silk covering her supernatural accoutrements and stood naked before the matadors, the most beautiful girl they had ever seen.

«The bath is very big», Dalí told the tall bullfighter, pulling at his jacket as Amanda stepped into the water. The matador needed no further persuasion. He tossed his clothes on the floor and jumped in. The other two followed. They sat on the side of the tub with sprouting erections and Dalí looked so serious we knew he was in a state of high euphoria. He had achieved *una estocada limpia*. The bullfighters had taken their clothes off. It was a spectacular kill.

«After the corrida the men must go to the brothel. Come, Violetera», and we left them to it.

The *Teatro Museo Dalí* opened on 23rd September 1974 and I had my hair cut. I raised it twenty inches from my waist to my shoulders and the Divine seemed oddly perturbed. He looked at me with bulging eyes. «Are you saving up to buy a striped suit?», he said and turned to talk to somebody else.

A band was playing squeaky music. The camera bulbs created a carnival atmosphere and the journalists were asking banal questions. Reynolds Morse had turned up with a very young girl I didn't recognize and the writer Josep Pla looked like an antique taken from a dusty window and polished just for the occasion. Louis XIV and Dalí led the way through the circle of corridors in the style of courtiers at Versailles, their fingertips just touching. Gala and her Page of Cups had arrived from the small castle Dalí had bought his wife in the nearby village of Pubol. Gala had filled the castle with guitars and recording equipment and, as muse and musical connoisseur, planned to guide Jeff Fenholt up the rock charts with the same obscure powers that had inspired Eluard's poetry and



Dalí's art. It was an allure every bit as tempting as the paintings he took back to Long Island.

Gala was clutching a wind-up dog that barked and begged when you set it down on the ground, a gift from Jeff. «Jev, Jev», she cried and she hobbled along behind him. «Jev, Jev», and Dalí glanced at me with a pained expression.

We passed through into the main salon. There were speeches by local dignitaries and Dalí gave a complicated discourse on flies, the railway station at Perpignan, vegetal curves and the geodesic dome, like a giant eye above our heads. It had been designed by Emilio Piñero, who had died in a car crash without seeing his work completed.

There were galleries filled with madness and amusements and a windowless salon that held *The Spectre of Sex Appeal* and *The Bread Basket*, small, exquisite masterpieces salvaged from the distant past. The lips of Mae West had become a shapely red sofa and the rock paintings of Antonio Pitxot filled a little corner. The old Cadillac that had first taken me to Cadaqués had come to its final rest in the museum's courtyard with the title *Le Taxi Pluvieux*. Live snails crawled over the interior in a constant rainstorm that made me think of the Deluge, a time of transformation, as that day of the opening we seemed to enter a time of change and decay.

I stood alone and looked at the car. The lines were sweeping and baroque like the creations of Gaudí. It was still shiny. The two cs from the name Cadillac were missing, creating an invented goodbye: adilla, adieu, *adiós*.

Franco had just announced his desire to restore the monarchy to Spain and Dalí talked of little else as we made our daily tours of the museum. It was an immediate success and he was thrilled. He would march in and rush around examining the exhibits. He would come to a sudden and dramatic halt as if seeing some object for the first time. He would make adjustments, praise the staff and stride down the Ramblas to have tea at the *Astoria* where he was happy to sit for hours doing nothing. We watched the tourist buses come and go. He would comment on the old men in running shoes and fat ladies wearing pantsuits.

«Would you take that one to bed for ten thousand dollars, Carlitos?», he asked and pointed at a hippopotamus waddling by on

the arm of a thin man with a fine moustache. «God makes them and God puts them together».

The waiter came with a plate of soft cheese and a brown pot filled with local honey.

«Can I take your photograph Señor Dalí?», someone asked and, nodding gracefully, he sat up as rigid as an emperor. The amateur photographer had pimples and the Divine's eyes lit up.

«Try and get my good side. I don't want the world to see my terrible complexion». He loved people with limps and spots and boils; the ugly and grotesque. He would ridicule these people but in a way that was so clever they laughed and were never offended. Like a circus clown he knew how to play the audience and, as his act was always the same, he needed the constantly changing faces.

One day while we were sitting at the *Astoria*, Xavier Cugat approached and Dalí shrank away as if from a leper. Cugat, the man who had led the band in all those Carmen Miranda musicals of the forties, had returned to his native Catalonia frail and stooped. He coughed and Dalí leapt up and hurried down the street. «Come, come, Carlitos. We have to go».

I chased along behind him and my pounding footsteps were like the sharp knock that awakens you from a dream: Dalí was growing old. He had celebrated his seventieth birthday on the 11th of May that year and through all the festivities at the *Meurice* in Paris I had been aware how much it had depressed him. He still talked as if he worked long hours in the studio but really, he now found it hard to work, and had settled for signing blank sheets that would be used for false prints, thousands every day. I put them down in front of him and Captain Moore took them away. «How wonderful, to make money just by your signature», the Divine said.

He thought he was cretinizing the world by this act but, even then, as I held those sheets of artist's paper, I saw those signatures writing the script of a tragedy. Dalí's father had been the notary in Figueres, his signature on a document being proof that the contents of that document were authentic and legal. It was due to the vile potentials of paranoia-critica, Dalí's own invention, that the legitimacy of his signature would become the subject of legal actions and court cases all over the world. The notary's son, the master manipulator, was signing away his own reputation with

every blank sheet that carried the name Dalí, each signature another degree of subtraction from his real and significant achievements.

## *Cledalique*

On the 17th of September 1975, five Basque terrorists were executed on the orders of General Franco. Dalí sent him a telegram of congratulations. He praised the dictator's sense of discipline, then added to this miscalculation by telling the press that it would have been better had the six men Franco spared also been executed. «What I meant was better than another civil war, but no one bothered to understand», he lamented.

The world had adored Salvador Dalí. He was a showman; crazy and flamboyant; a surrealist heirloom. They had loved him with a passion and now hated him with greater passion. Death threats appeared on the whitewashed walls around Port Lligat and the chair Dalí regularly occupied at his favourite restaurant, the *Via Veneto* in Barcelona, was blown up. His first thought when George Harrison had materialized over the garden wall had been that he was an assassin. Dalí had always been paranoid. Now, with some justification. He talked about buying a bullet-proof Cadillac and shipping it to Spain. «Al Capone had one. He was a wonderful person. Very *soigné*».

The people of Cadaqués regarded Dalí's telegram as yet another betrayal. They had been Republicans during the Civil War and, as Catalans, concealed deep sympathies for the Basque separatists. Twenty-five years earlier, at the beginning of the 1950s, Dalí had attended a private conference with Franco to discuss some project as the State Painter, a role inherited through the centuries from Velázquez. It had been a bitter cold winter that year. Snow lay deep on the terraces and the severe frosts had ravaged the olive groves and vineyards. The people pleaded with Don Salvador to speak with the General on their behalf and bring some relief to the village.

He had not done so and, on the contrary, had boasted that when

the General had asked about Cadaqués, he had told him all was well. Franco had never crossed the hills to the pueblo but remembered it with a soldier's nostalgia for every battle won. Nearby Figueres had been the last town to fall to his Nationalist troops in the Civil War, and Republican officials had assembled in Cadaqués for their final meeting in March 1939, before sailing along the coast to exile in France.

Franco had not forgotten Cadaqués but, they said, Dalí had. The income derived from olives, native wines and the pepper trade shrank to nothing. The winter pestilence caused untold poverty and many people had been forced to immigrate. During the following decades, while the Costa Brava was being developed for tourism, Cadaqués continued a way of life little changed since the Middle Ages. The fishermen cherished visions of converting their waterfront homes into lodging houses and transforming the harbour into a yachting marina. Dalí blocked every scheme. He wanted the village to remain the way he remembered it as a child and, by forcing his will on the regional planners, while the rest of the coast sprawled in a confusion of cement and suntan oil, Cadaqués slept in a restless stupor of thwarted dreams. Dalí had unwittingly created a unique condition that attracted artists and bohemians and, although the local people are now beginning to appreciate the unspoiled charms of their village, it did not stop them drinking champagne to celebrate the day that Dalí died.

Captain Moore had left Dalí's employ and the two men had begun the final phase of their relationship: as rivals in numerous protracted and costly court battles. «We have found someone younger, more intelligent and much better looking», Gala told the Captain as Enric Sabater filled his shoes. The muscular, former footballer became, not only the Dalís' secretary, but also their business manager and body guard. He even carried a gun stuck in his waistband like a gangster, which frightened Dalí more than soothed him. Two guardias civiles were stationed outside the house for protection and when I took guests for our nights in the garden with pink champagne they were searched before they were allowed to enter. I did not have to go through this outrage but was perpetually embarrassed for those who did. One night, when we had a gypsy band performing flamenco, they complained after the

show that they had not been sufficiently paid. «You'd better watch your back. I'll return one night with a knife», the guitarist said and Sabater just opened his jacket and grinned.

«No more gypsies, Violetera», Dalí whispered. «Just bring beautiful people».

His tastes never varied but the atmosphere had changed. The execution of the Basques was the sign on the road before a vital turning. General Franco died a month later on the 20th of November and, after two days, in accordance with the dictator's desires, Juan Carlos de Borbón y Borbón succeeded his late grandfather, Alfonso XIII, to the Spanish throne. The whole country heaved a sigh of relief. Spain was straining to catch up with the rest of Europe. Franco had seemed a relic of the past and, quite suddenly, so did Don Salvador. He reeled out the same witticisms about farting and masturbation. Guests still admired Louis XIV's profile and listened with submissive expressions as he spoke of the day so many years before when the Ambassador had kissed my hand. Dalí dressed in a style that had been exotic in the fifties; oddly in step with the sixties; now sadly anachronistic as a new decade was half way through.

Dalí believed if he persevered with his routine, he would stay eternally pubescent. «No drink. No drugs. No soporifics», he advised from the mountain of vitamins he took every day. He had flu shots at the *St Regis Hotel* and took anti-depressants on prescription through all the years I knew him. Gala fought the battle with nips and tucks in New York under the scalpel of Maxwell Maltz, and with courses of cellular therapy at La Prairie, Paul Niehan's clinic in Switzerland —a treatment that was said to make people more sexually stimulated and, in Gala's case, it was true.

Jeff Fenholt was still being flown in from Long Island and, as he was afraid of flying, there were occasions when Enric Sabater crossed the Atlantic to the United States to escort him back the following day, exhausting but highly rewarded. They stayed in the castle at Pubol where Jeff composed and Gala lived out her fantasies. The shameless cost of these brief excursions was inconsequential. Gala was rich and the rich, Dalí said, can have anything. Gala had long been famed for being mean with her money but, the older she got, the more eccentric she became. She

kept wads of bills in dusty envelopes and hidden in old snakeskin handbags. She often accused the staff of stealing and we would search through the house finding money in jars, behind books and tucked under the Oriental carpet in her room. It was like an Easter egg hunt. She had a sister living in Vienna and, although she never saw her, when Gala once heard she was unable to pay her bills, she went to see Michael Stout, her lawyer in New York, with \$1,000 in cash and instructions that he was to fly to Austria to give the money to her sister personally, a task costing thousands of dollars more in added expenses. The lawyer proposed sending the money by bank draft but Gala's childhood poverty had given her an unshakable devotion to cash.

When Gala was away, Dalí played the pop song *Baby Come Back* by the Equals over and over again. He would cry real tears and say his life would be meaningless without her. When they were together, they argued like any bourgeois couple, something that had never occurred in the past. When Dalí had new toys to play with, a pretty boy or an obliging couple, Gala was expected to leave for the castle. She would pack her suitcase and, walking with a stoop, she played the old woman being sent away. We ignored the charade. Gala was not a sympathetic character and it was hard to feel sorry for her because, apart from her act, her expression remained identical, mask-like from all the lifts, the same as Mrs Morse and the Duchess of Windsor in the photograph on the wall in the hut. They all ended up looking alike with pixie faces and pointed chins.

Once, at the restaurant at the *Hotel Duran* in Figueres, Dalí ordered his beloved dressed lobster and then sat there without touching it.

«Eat, little Dalí», Gala ordered.

«No, I will not. The food is poisoned. You taste it Violetera», he said and, after I had done so, he still refused to eat. «Violetera has an iron stomach. Nothing makes him sick. He is a sorcerer. He is making nyacki-nyacki with the chef. They are in this together. They are trying to kill me. You are all trying to kill me...», and he sat there trembling in his polkadot tie like an aged clown lost from the circus.

Gala came around the table, took his walking cane and began hitting him with it. She chased him out into the street. «You're an

idler. A good for nothing. You have ruined my whole life. I would have been happy without you. You've ruined everything».

«Witch, witch», he screamed. «You're an evil old woman. Help me, help me. She's trying to kill me».

He was appealing to the people watching the scene with cretinous grins as if it were being filmed for the movies. It was unreal. These two old people were like two dinosaurs engaged in battle. When they were apart, they spoke highly of each other but, together, it was like looking into the mirror and seeing the passage of the years in their partner's every wrinkle. «I always wanted to leave him but he was too weak. He could never have survived without me, Carlos», Gala said. «Dalí's fame and success are due to me and me alone».

The spectacle at the *Hotel Duran* passed, but it was a preview of much worse scenes that were coming. The fights, while pitiful, added a touch of human interest to the false prints scandal being followed ravenously by the press.

Dalí was relying more heavily on his oldest friends and seemed pleased in his ungracious way when I was close at hand. I did not have a social position like Madame Kalaschnikoff; or a burgeoning career like Amanda Lear. I did perform in several more plays in France and then one day I met some comrades from the Living Theater in a Paris café. «We're leaving for Italy tomorrow. We have a new piece and it's wonderful», Judith Melina said. «There is a part for you».

I had always liked the idea of not knowing where I would be one year from any given moment and, with that philosophy, I stopped whatever it was I was doing and went. The play was called the *Tower of Money* and it was being staged for the industrial workers in the northern regions of Italy controlled by what were known as the Red Councils, towns where the people had elected communist administrations. We performed in halls, canteens and in factory courtyards where disputes were a way of life and our story supported the union man's right to strike. We attracted capacity crowds everywhere we went. The Living Theater had become a mythical bird, rising again like the phoenix from the debris of its South American tour.

The company was run like a commune and we were equally paid



—or unpaid— irrespective of our part although I was delighted to be given a major role. I sat on a high stool denouncing Chile and Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil. «Fascism still haunts the world. In South America today...». I would begin and, as I read the sickening roster of torture and brutality, other members of the cast would be passing among the audience handing out counterfeit dollar bills. «If you accept this money you are accepting death, the death of the workers». Others were wailing: «I can't pay my rent; I can't pay the doctor. I can't pay. I can't pay». The story showed how capitalism exploited the working-class and we crawled over the damp cobbles unsure about our solidarity with the working men in their shabby clothes as they were unsure of their solidarity with us, a troupe of aging flower children.

The landscape of factories wreathed in the grimy mist of Reggio nell'Emilia, Vittorio Veneto and Bologna awakened old melancholies and reminded me of the long hours stolen from my adolescence in San Francisco when I stood before a moulding machine watching lines of melting plastic. The months dawdled with irritating slowness and I knew I needed to reexamine my life when I became aware that my fondest daily pleasure was printing another X on the calendar. I was on a different tangent. India had taken me in another direction. I was apolitical and Italy was bitterly cold that winter.

Dalí always insisted I left a telephone number wherever I went and, on one occasion, he called at the home of a working family where I had been lodged in the customary style of the Living Theater. I was out with friends and the call furnished the Divine with a new anecdote he spun into a legend.

«Señor Lozano, please?».

«He's not here now. Who's calling?».

«Dalí».

«Who?».

«Salvador Dalí».

«One moment please. I'll write it down. What was it again?».

«Tell Señor Lozano that Salvador Dalí, the painter, has called».

«We don't need any painting. The house has just been done».

Dalí was so famous he loved it when he spoke to simple people and they had never heard of him. «*C'est colossal*. These creatures are

too witless to ever be truly unhappy».

The tour came to an end and I cut my hair short. Like the old man in the story by Valéry, I stared into the mirror and saw a new person emerging from the glass. «Goodbye, Violetera», I said. «I won't be seeing you again».

I resigned once more from the company knowing I would regret it and knowing with a deeper instinct I was doing the right thing. The only way to get work as an actor is when you are in work. You must go from one job to the next, building your career. When an opportunity appears, you jump on it. A natural star like a shooting star zips into the firmament, growing brighter and brighter without a moment's pause or thought for anyone of anything around them. You must be born with a silver dagger designed for stabbing backs and I lacked that killer instinct.

Dalí was disappointed that I did not continue along the line he had traced in my imagination when I had first been cast in *Hair*, but was thrilled to have me back in Cadaqués after the winter tour of the *Tower of Money*. He studied my haircut for several days before making a comment. «I measure my life by the length of your hair, Carlos», he finally said and I realized our friendship was acquiring a new personality. I was a different person, less androgynous, less the Dalí ideal, more the Dalí ally and confidant. He had stopped urging me to follow the path cut through the jungle by Amanda and I had stopped chasing through the wilderness in search of a father. I had always been more at ease playing a role because I had been eternally ashamed and mystified by the past I was unable to change. I had yearned to be something else or someone else but, having made the decision to give up the theatre, I began to feel comfortable just being myself.

The days were growing warmer. The death threats had stopped and Dalí was eating properly. Whenever Louis XIV was due to arrive in Cadaqués he would say: «The King is coming...», and so, when he called one morning with the same message: «Dress like a God and come quickly, the King is coming...». I hurried to the house expecting to find Madame Kalaschnikoff.

I arrived as Dalí was climbing into the car with Gala. «You can sit next to My Rat», she said and Arturo, sniffing and twitching,

drove the fifteen minute walk I had just made to Port Lligat, back once again to Cadaqués.

Dalí was wearing all his medals and ribbons. His hair had been combed. Even his jacket was clean. Gala looked like an ancient child in a Russian peasant dress. A new bow loomed over the back of her shrunken head. She seemed happy and I knew there would be no arguing that day. «The King is coming. The King is coming», Dalí screamed at the fishermen along the way and they carried on smoking their pipes and repairing their nets.

Arturo parked in the plaza and Dalí rushed out to the end of the small pier below the *Ayuntamiento*, the old town hall that rises over the sea like a tower from a Moorish castle. Gala and I followed and watched as he unfolded a clean white handkerchief, placed it on the ground and fell to his knees. Captain Moore had hurried along behind Dalí and hovered in the background with the two ocelots, so dusty and ragged it was impossible to tell Babou from Bouba. It was surreal; a marvellous, unrepeatable scene and the local people were ecstatic. They hated Dalí but they loved his madness. There was something very Spanish about it.

«The King is coming», Dalí cried. The crowd was swelling along the waterfront. The mayor was sweating in a jacket and tie. Children were waving Spanish flags and the band began to play as the Royal Yacht entered the mouth of the bay. King Juan Carlos and Queen Sophie were meeting the State Painter in Cadaqués before crossing the hills for a tour of the *Teatro Museo* in Figueres. «I arranged everything», Gala said and I learned later it had been organized by Enric Sabater. The ex-footballer would make his fortune more by being a tough negotiator than by cheating Don Salvador, whom he adored.

Dalí, having secured his position on the pier, remained on his knees for the entire hour it took for the yacht to dock. Captain Moore continued to linger in the background and, the moment the Royal party stepped ashore, he began to shriek out an invitation for the King and Queen to visit the rival Dalí museum he had opened in the village's closed down cinema.

The Divine came to his feet and, having played the part of the land's loyalist subject, he now behaved in his normal way, like a monarch. King Juan Carlos ignored the Captain, acknowledged the

crowds with the briefest bow and stepped into the driving seat of the state limousine driven by an aide to Cadaqués. He drove like a racing champion to Figueres with his bodyguard at his side, Dalí clutching my arm in the back seat. Gala had got her claws into the Queen and followed behind with Arturo. A fleet of cars carried dignitaries, uniformed soldiers and the worthies of Cadaqués. Captain Moore stood in the square with the ocelots and watched us go.

«His museum will be a lasting and spectacular failure. Dante will make sure of that», Dalí said and he was referring to the bust of Dante he had given the Captain as a gift to mark the museum's opening. Dalí believed the bust brought bad luck and that was what he wanted to bestow on his former secretary. «*La uña y el dedo van juntos*», the Divine would say: the nail and the finger go together, and that was the story with Dalí and the Captain. They were inseparable, a divorced couple united by mutual hatreds, commitments, jealousies, even admiration. There is no greater form of respect than imitation and the Captain had copied Dalí's style and every mannerism. For more than a decade, he had managed the vast sums of money generated by the Divine's paintings, prints and advertising contracts that included scores of diverse products; everything from Toyota cars to Lanvin chocolate. Captain Moore had earned a commission on every deal and, even then, was boasting a personal fortune of \$30 million.

The King adored the *Teatro Museo*. «It will add immeasurably to your reputation and fame», he told the Divine.

«That has been my only hope. My reputation as the world's greatest painter has been gained for the benefit of national interests and I was forced to achieve fame to avenge the death of my mother whom I worshipped and in whose face I spat remembering this deed as a sacred act from the culture of a former existence».

The King smiled uneasily. Queen Sophie humoured Gala by posing for a thousand photographs and the striped tie worn by the Mayor of Cadaqués was so tight his face was as red as the lips in the museum's Mae West sofa.

I was surrounded by art. Immersed in art. There was so much art in our excursions and conversations it seemed natural that I should

dedicate my life to art. The following summer, I became the proprietor of a gallery and found as few people do my true vocation.

I formed a partnership with Miette Bessiere, who had entered the Divine's world while she was living with Nicole, a French girl who looked like a boy in that cute gamine way. They would make love to amuse Dalí and one day, he took his clothes off and masturbated in front of them. Miette had been a virgin at the time and seeing Dalí in this exhibition changed her life. He was the first man she had seen naked and she began to idolize him like a God. She was obsessed. She read the obscene parts to his legendary play and believed he was writing it for her.

But Dalí was quickly bored by all obsessions but his own and Miette fell into disfavour. She wanted to find her way back into the Divine Court and I was delighted to ease her way by going into the gallery business. Miette put up the money, we shook hands, swore oaths of eternal loyalty, and opened Cledalique in July 1977. Dalí gave me the name. It had come from his novel *Hidden Faces* and was an invented word that meant the key to Dalí. «I will be your Fairy Godfather», he said and he roamed through the two small rooms connected by a winding staircase, the wheels of his fecund mind humming and spinning. It was his idea to line the outside of the gallery with old Cadaqués doors like the doors that made the «Accidents in Art» in Port Lligat. We still inspected these random masterpieces made by the fishermen but with the added caution of paranoia and death threats. Together, we planned the interior: we covered the ceiling with a net and the walls with gnarled limbs of driftwood among masks of various village personalities, Henri-François Rey, Michel Peissel, Brooks Baekeland and the Twins, John and Dennis Myers —«True free spirits», as Dalí once said.

I was making the moulds in plaster and painting them, and the more people I did the more who wanted to be included. I found a sculpture of the Buddha to add an Oriental flavour and, at the entrance, I placed a wooden mermaid Dalí instantly coveted. «You never bring me any presents», he said.

«I bring guests every night», I replied.

«It's not the same. I adore gifts. No one brings me gifts. I am neglected and abused».

«You can have it after the show then».

«That's not the same. A gift should come from the heart. I give you the gift of my genius and you don't appreciate it».

«I do».

He stamped his foot. «You don't», he said.

The opening show was called the *Doors of Chance* and consisted of large portraits of Marcel Duchamp's work and Duchamp in various guises: dressed as Rose Selavy, his female alter ego; playing chess; with a star shaved into his hair —an idea from the thirties imitated by the punks. Dalí walked around the gallery stabbing the air with his stick. «No, no. Put the large one on top of the small one. Not the other way round», he said and I made the change. «Good. Good. Your *botiga* will be a great success, Violetera. I will always protect you. Even if you are selfish».

He called my gallery a *botiga*, the Catalan word for shop, and, when people were drinking wine at a vernissage, he then called it a bodega, the Spanish word for a wine store.

The show opened that evening and it was the most romantic night Cadaqués has ever seen. There was only one other gallery in the village, run by the Italian architect Franco Bombelli, and his accomplishments had demonstrated the potential for showing art. Now, there are ten galleries. Cadaqués is on the international circuit and displays new work by the most important contemporary painters.

Cledalique was situated below the church and the cobbled courtyard with its two tall cypresses made a surreal setting. I dressed for the opening as an angel with golden wings and played host to a gathering so glamorous they all should have been in masks on the wall. The masked ones were there with La Suzanna and Jonathan Guinness; the Pop Artist Richard Hamilton and La Contessa Marie-Claire, who had once been invited to a private meeting with Dalí, who planned to paint her portrait. When she arrived at the appointed hour, she found forty other girls already waiting. «You have the most divine arse in Paris», he whispered in explanation. Eduardo Arranz-Bravo, «the new Picasso», a short, strong conquistador, kept looking over his shoulder in case Gala appeared and stuck her hand down his trousers, which she had done before. «Very strong show», he said. And the lovely Isabel

Salisachs purchased the first piece. Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* filled the smoky air. There were trays of delicious *hors d'oeuvres* smuggled across the border from Perpignan. The Baron Ernst von Wedel, who was now sharing my life, as I was sharing his, was doing an excellent job with the champagne. Miette Bessiere was glowing and the tall, exquisite Belgian Sophie van Schendel kissed me warmly. «It's wonderful, Carlos», she said and I hated myself for glancing continually at the door.

There is nothing worse than waiting for someone who fails to appear. He continued with lessons that helped me understand and appreciate art. He attended other openings. But that first night was my night and he was afraid he may not have been the centre of attention when he would have been. Of course.

He called early the following morning. «*Trabajo mucho. Un beso y un abrazo*», he said. He was working hard but had found time to send me a kiss and an embrace before reaching the soul of this sudden urgency. «And how is the siren?», he asked.

He wanted my mermaid and I gave it to him.

## *The Fall And Fall*

In the spring of 1978, Dalí was elected to membership of the French Beaux-Arts Academy and we fussed around for months preparing his vestments and acceptance speech, both of which had to be more dazzling than anything Paris had ever seen. A corpus of designers from Christian Dior worked on the costume and the pretty things running around the salon at the *Hôtel Meurice* assisting were so exquisitely Dalinian, Dalí was unable to keep still for the fittings. «I do believe I can smell a virgin», he cried as he climbed into a blue uniform festooned in glittering braid. Dalí carried an officer's rapier with the eyes of Gala etched into the blade and wore a triangular Napoleonic hat. «God praise the cliché. It always works», he said, oiling his moustache with the semen from a tuberose.

The Academy was an imposing baroque building opposite the Louvre and, inside, we took our places on benches that rise to an ornate cupola in tiers that emulate the Roman Senate. The Divine stepped up to the podium. The audience fell silent and he made a speech as gripping as an adventure story. He told the legend of Philippe Le Bon, the Valois Duke whose court in the State of Burgundy during the 15th century had rivalled the extravagances of Versailles. The court had been famous for its malicious gossip but, when the gossip maligned the Duke's favourite mistress, he was moved to devise a plan of sly and brilliant revenge. «His paramour was a ravishing female who had been endowed with copious tresses of hair. Not merely on her head, but in a golden forest between her slender thighs. The Duke created an order of chivalry he called *Toison d'Or*, the Order of the Golden Fleece, a society so exclusive, everyone wanted to join. The initiates swore oaths of allegiance and the Duke presented new members with a necklace made from his mistress's golden hair smelling faintly of their conjugal essence. In



this way, Philippe Le Bon cretinized his noblemen and attained sublime vengeance».

As Dalí spoke, he pulled mad faces and beat his fists against the lectern. He told the audience the quest for the Golden Fleece was a portrayal of man's search for spiritual grace and defined this condition as being empty and soft like ripe melting camembert. Dalí unsheathed his sword and, with the eyes of Gala glinting in the overhead lights, the fellows of the Académie Française rose in a standing ovation. He threw out his chest, gripped his hands behind his back and only those who had sat watching old newsreels of Hitler knew who had inspired his act.

We had spent hours in the library making notes for the acceptance speech and Dalí had reached the conclusion during our research that he had finally understood the meaning of his painting *The Persistence of Memory*, forty years after its completion. «The melting watches represent the Golden Fleece. Jason's voyage symbolizes the pursuit of perfection, just as bending time epitomizes my long journey seeking the light of truth. When I work, time becomes empty and soft and, when the Divine Gala sits reading to me in the studio, I am in the blissful state of enlightenment».

The photographers followed us back to the *Meurice* and Dalí postured magnificently with his sword raised, his hat under his arm and his friends around him. Gala was wearing some huge pieces of costume jewellery and clutched a mechanical monkey to her bosom as if it were Jeff Fenholt, who had given it to her. It was a wonderful arrangement. Each time he arrived in Pubol he carried a furry toy, and each time he left he took a Dalí masterpiece.

Reynolds Morse was grinning under a big hat and at his side stood a flawless carving, his wife Eleanor, her face fading into childhood. Dado Ruspoli looked ageless and stoned.

«*Bonjour*», he called.

«*Bonjour*», I replied.

Enric Sabater moved through the gathering with the effortless confidence big men acquire and only seemed inept when the model Marie-Jose Welch entered the room. Men who adore women always look awkward in the company of a sex symbol and Marie-Jose was archetypal in a crimson robe that clung to her like body paint.

Everything about her was exaggerated and luxurious. Her heels were mountain high; even her cigarettes expressed a phallic affinity. Under the robe she was naked and Louis XIV gripped my arm to steady herself. «What a specimen», she mumbled.

Marie-Jose Welch had gatecrashed the ceremony at the Academy and gatecrashed the party at the *Meurice* with the same exotic presumption. Beautiful girls do not need an invitation. After she had made her entrance, Amanda Lear appeared with her Marquis. Marie-Jose had posed with Dalí but now, as the interest of the photographers shifted to Amanda, the passing vision of the Divine standing there like an old wooden soldier made me think of Edward James.

«She's stealing his day», Louis XIV said.

I remained silent and watched the scene as if I were no longer a part of it. A vague melancholy reached out and touched me like the first wave of an incoming tide. Dalí had always dominated every situation but his power was on the decline. Amanda was a rising star and Sabater now seemed more in charge of Dalí than Dalí was in charge of his *bon noi*, his good boy, as he called him.

Gala was too gaga to register these changes. She no longer concerned herself with the business affairs and spent her days dreaming of Jeff Fenholt. She even got the two men in her life confused, calling Jeff Salvador and Dalí Jev, which angered Dalí to the point of violence. Gala was crumbling into caricature. The facelifts were falling, although her tongue remained in perfect working order. She took one look at Alain Philippe and the sun broke through the foggy ruins of her mind. «Your new husband is a gigolo, *petit* Amanda», she said. «We have heard bad things about him. And from his friends of all people».

Amanda hurried through the throng on her elegant heels to report Gala's remarks to the Divine and the twinkle returned to his eyes. «How wrong she is, poor dear. The Marquis doesn't look like a gigolo at all», he said. «He looks like one of those baby seals you see in *National Geographic* being massacred».

Amanda always forgot they were a double act. Regardless of each other's weaknesses, even because of them; regardless of the fights, and the fights were getting worse, Dalí and Gala really loved each other. They still held hands in public.

We returned to Cadaqués and I began preparing the summer shows. Miette Bessiere and I affably parted company and I opened a new gallery called Sa Luminera on the ground floor of the Baron's house, a vaulted cave designed for storing fishing boats. Ernst von Wedel and I were an item that lasted five years and came to an end when I launched the Galería Carlos Lozano.

«There is nothing more terrible than being an intelligent man without power», Dalí once said and now I understood what he had meant. I was independent and independence provides the will to fulfil your own destiny. I had been sailing without direction like a boat adrift. The gallery gave me confidence as I took that awesome step into a new decade. I became thirty and it was less painful than I had anticipated and far less painful than being thirty-one. At thirty you maintain a link with your twenties, when every breath is charged with optimism. At thirty-one, youth has flown and life moves into a new sphere; not worse, but different.

Although Dalí was incapable of openly showing affection, his vanity inspired benevolence in strange elusive ways. I had occasionally found money in my clothes after modelling and once he gave me a *bocadillo*, a Spanish sandwich, containing a slice of Manchega cheese and a garnish of bank notes. I almost ate it. He had not turned up for the opening of Cledalique, but attended other vernissages and often sent clients who purchased pieces on his recommendation. The first years are the hardest for a gallery and without his subtle manoeuvres, I may not have survived.

My plan when I had first decided to open an art gallery was to begin painting myself. But, like literature and journalism, the two pursuits are in conflict. Running a gallery requires infinite time behind the scenes with temperamental artists and, once their work is on display, like the work, you are permanently on show. Marcel Duchamp may have been cynical towards galleries, but artists need them. Selling art is an art form. The buyers are acquiring something ethereal: social prestige; proof of their own good taste; the faith that their taste will be rewarded when the painter's work increases in value, as often it does.

Dalí was always delighted when I was doing well and would send hot kisses down the telephone wires.

«I have just sold two sculptures and a small oil».

«Who purchased the sculptures?», he asked, knowing the answer.

'A French woman?

«Did she ask for a discount?».

«No, she was far too gracious. Elegant people never ask for discounts», I told him.

He laughed. «You are becoming a Catalan, Carlos», he said and hung up.

I was meeting new people every day and continued to escort the young and enticing to Port Lligat. I arrived one night with three seriously attractive Swedish girls, the Sjödahl sisters Anna, Marie and Sophie. They were with an Austrian boy named Kurt who, like the three girls, had long blonde hair and could have passed as the fourth sister. Dalí took him to one side to show him his latest invention. There had been a craze in pens with little ships floating from top to bottom in an oily liquid and Dalí produced one of these from his pocket. «This is a magical pen», he said in a conspiratorial voice. «It contains the Divine urine, the holy water infused with the aroma of myrrh and the gift of genius. It is full of protein. You should drink some».

Gala usually hated girls but smuggled the three sisters off to her hut so they could play with her enormous collection of clockwork toys. «No young men», she screamed. «No young men», and I assumed she was being loyal to Jeff.

The travel writer Bruce Chatwin was on an assignment from the *Sunday Times* and tried to engage the gathering in cerebral conversation. «I can see you are quite intelligent», Dalí said in a tone that implied the Englishman lacked the Divine's own intellectual gifts. «Have you read my brilliant novel?», he asked, turning instantly to the painter Phil Clarke, who had come to pay homage to the Maestro, as many young artists did.

«Where did you say you were from?», he asked him.

«Australia», Phil Clarke replied.

«On the Fifth Day, the Lord made all the animals and he left it to his collaborator, the Devil, to make one more. Do you know which animal he made? It was the kangaroo».

«Amazing».

«They are the ugliest animals in the world. Have some more

champagne. Or would you prefer the mystic myrrh? With this pen you will be able to draw with the precision of the alchemist Dalí».

«I already can», the Australian said and Dalí, pretending not to hear, focused on a new arrival.

«*Bonjour*», he called. I filled the glasses. Marsha Chase floated by with a beautiful boy and John (or Dennis) Myers evaporated into the olive groves with a ravishing girl with flowers in her hair and nothing above the waist. The night was warm. The guests were wearing the eager expressions of people waiting for something to happen and Rosa appeared with a plate of almonds. A swimming pool shaped like a giant penis had just been completed and a girl in an animal-skin costume sat on the edge impersonating Marilyn Monroe. Dalí had become too nervous to swim in the bay and had filled his new pool with lobsters, crabs, memories and filtered sea water that sparkled with phosphorescence. There was a helium balloon like the moon's shadow above our heads and three plastic fish on the top of tall poles flickered and shimmered in the moonlight. The sink unit shone like an angel and when Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* came to an end I turned the record over and played it again.

Anna, Marie and Sophie Sjö Dahl surfaced on the terrace with Gala, each of them holding a small furry toy. «Is there a toilet?», Anna asked Dalí and the Divine stared at her as if she were being impertinent.

«My dear», he said.

«You can use the bushes», Gala told her and Bruce Chatwin laughed so much he almost fell off his chair. He was a man with a wonderful sense of humour.

Anna had been carrying a portfolio with her and when she returned from her call of nature she showed Dalí an old print with a faded signature just legible as his. «I wondered if you would resign it for me?», she asked and his eyes almost popped out of their sockets.

«You will have to consult my lawyer», he told her and, at that moment, Sue and Jonathan Guinness arrived with a request from Austria. La Suzanna asked the Divine to design a gravure for the Viennese publisher Fritz Molden and he twirled his moustache with violent animation.

«*C'est colossal*», he said. «I would be so delighted. The charge will be fifty thousand dollars».

«Fifty thousand dollars?».

«In cash», added Gala.

«It's rather more than I had expected», Sue said.

«I am a prostitute, my dear. I am not concerned with the problems of the client, or indeed who the client might be. Like every prostitute, I just want my money. I love money and dream every night of sleeping in an ocean of money, the waves rustling like crispy green backs».

Sue and Jonathan returned the following evening with the \$50 thousand... in cash. Gala instantly abandoned the mechanical dog padding around the courtyard barking and stashed the loot in her handbag. The sight of money always made her mind snap back into lucidity.

At the end of the summer, Dalí called me at the gallery and I was dispatched as *aide-de-camp* to the *Bar Boya* to meet Prince Vittorio Emanuele di Savoia, the son of King Umberto and the pretender to the throne of Italy. He had arrived in Cadaqués on a lavish yacht with three friends, the Venezuelan owner, a Swiss art connoisseur and an Italian, playboys on a stag tour. Our party expanded when we met Sandra Harnden, a Russian beauty and the daughter of Princess Vassiltchikov, who had a house in the village. Sandra was with her boyfriend, a cute English boy, and Nuria Aymami, a village girl, a pretty sexy blonde who sold shoes in the local shoe shop.

We walked to Port Lligat and when we entered the garden Dalí remained seated. «Turn on the light, Carlos», he said and I climbed over the terraces to ignite the *Lavabo Metaphysique*. «Look, it is more beautiful than the moon», he said in a voice void of emotion. He then launched into his routine anecdote about the visit once made to Port Lligat by Prince Vittorio's father. «He is the only King I have seen naked. After we had been swimming, he changed behind my back and the vision was adorable. He had a white bottom and a very small limousine».

I laughed, as I always laughed, but nobody else was amused. Gala materialized like a ghost in a long grey smock. She was looking for John Myers.

«Where's Johnny. I only want Johnny», she cried.

When she withdrew one of the playboys turned to me with a puzzled look. «Who was that?», he asked.

«Madame Dalí», I replied.

«I thought it was one of the staff», he said.

Rosa hobbled in on her fat legs with champagne. A boy named Nanu played the guitar while he sang the *Testament of Emily*, a sad Catalan folk song Dalí liked because it was about a man who dies for love. The song came to an end and there was a long silence. I could hear the call of the nightingales and the distant drum of the sea. It was a glorious Mediterranean night, like every night. The ingredients were the same as always, but the alchemist was losing his magic. The jokes were stale. Dalí continued to puff life into the rumours that there were orgies every night, but the only orgies now were in his imagination. When Dalí was tired, he brought the evening to an early close, standing suddenly and hurrying around saying good night. I could see this was coming and suggested we went to *El Barroco* for dinner. «We can't invite a Prince for a drink without a follow up», I said.

«You go, Carlos. Take everyone».

And we left. We giggled and joked. A handsome Italian with curly yellow hair named Stefano Vermizzi was the new owner of the *Barroco* and he was so jittery serving the Prince he spilled wine over his shirt. We giggled some more. We drank the best champagne, ordered the most expensive dishes and when the bill appeared the Venezuelan was so rich he refused to allow me to sign Dalí's tab. «I wouldn't dream of taking money from an old man», he said.

Sandra Harnden left with her English boy and I went with Nuria Aymami to have one more drink on the boat. It was a starry night at the end of the season and the sea in the bay was warm from the long months of sunshine. The sirens rose with little hands that peeled off our clothes and we went skinny dipping around the yacht. We laughed and splashed each other. I was the last one to climb back on board and, when I did, the Prince was waiting with a bathrobe which he wrapped around me. It was a noble gesture. He was the perfect aristocrat with diaphanous skin like porcelain and hair like old polished gold. I found it hard to take my eyes off him.

«God, what a dreadful bore he is», he said and it was a moment

before I realized he was talking about Dalí.

He gave me a drink and his attention moved to Nuria. She smiled. In small villages, there are so many crude, graceless girls, when a pretty one emerges she sparkles like a goddess. Such was Nuria, a little diamond, so complete her every deed was liberated from the bonds of normal convention. The Prince admired her because, as Louis XIV had said of Madame du Barry, everyone treated him like a King and Nuria treated the Prince like a man.

Nuria was famous for her looks and even more famous for the cacophonous screams that issued from her slender form when she made love. She screamed so loudly she made the bell in the church tower ring. It rang for births and deaths and, when it rang late at night, the fishermen starting work and the people winding their way home from the bars would stop and proudly smile. Nuria's orgasms were like an earthquake. Like a roll of thunder. Like the roar of the beast. She was Cinderella from the fairy tale and she had found her Prince. They went below to Vittorio's cabin and one of the playboys took me back to shore. The sound of the motor boat receded and I stood on the shingle beach and looked back at the yacht. The church bell was ringing. «Ah, it's our girl, at it again», an old man in a mouldy beret said and I was thinking about Don Salvador. There was a life going on and it was going on without him.

That summer was the last summer of our nights in the garden with pink champagne and beautiful people. The stars that had lit Dalí's extraordinary rise and flight of fame had moved into a new alliance. The luck that had travelled with him for seventy-five years had run out. The fall had started at his investiture into the Académie Française in Paris and it was in Paris once more where the decline became absolute.

In December the Musée National d'Art Moderne opened a major retrospective of Dalí's work at the Centre Georges Pompidou and his best paintings and surrealist objects began to arrive from all over the world. He had constructed what he called the *Temple of Bad Taste* in the high entrance hall and was discussing a plan with the conceptual artist Christo Javacheff of *wrapping* the building in canvas, just as the Bulgarian had made a parcel of the Bern Museum in 1968. «We must package it like a piece of garbage it is so



ugly...».

«But it is the mecca of modern art», I said. «It is always full of people».

«No, it is just *feo*. It is ugly», he said with finality.

There were scores of emissaries rushing in and out of the Royal Suite at the *Meurice*. The court was gathering. The city streets seemed to be tingling with excitement and Dalí gave hundreds of interviews. He usually hated exhibitions of his work because it gave the critics an excuse to attack him. But in Paris that winter he was in ecstasy and so was I. After the opening there was going to be a dinner party at the home of the Rothschilds and Dalí escorted me to his tailor where I had a dinner jacket made on his account. «But I'll never wear it again», I said.

«Then you shall wear it once», he replied.

Dalí dressed for the opening in a full length leopard-skin coat and arrived at the Centre Pompidou in a Rolls Royce with his white hair flying and his moustache ends as sharp as two scimitars. We passed through the entrance he had decorated with kitsch lamps from Figueres, between walls painted demolition pink and garnished with yards of plastic sausages. We reached the main door and a functionary barred the way.

«You cannot enter», he said.

«I am Da - lí...».

«You still can't go in».

«I cannot go in?», the Divine shrieked.

«There's a strike. No one is allowed to enter».

His eyes blazed. The camera bulbs popped. Gala screamed obscenities in Russian and I never did get to wear a dinner jacket and bow tie at a dinner party with the Divine. The party at the Rothschild's was cancelled. Christo had other commitments and had been unable or unwilling to wrap the museum, and Dalí was so angry he left early for New York.

It was a dreadful miscalculation. In the past, he had turned every problem into promotion and then surfed over the waves of publicity to greater acclaim and celebrity. The strike was quickly settled and the retrospective, opening two days later, attracted a record one million visitors in Paris and a record 250,000 visitors when the exhibition moved to the Tate Gallery in London.

But Dalí did not see the show. That winter, the annual flu shot gave him a debilitating dose of influenza and he never fully recovered. He returned to Cadaqués with the early stages of Parkinson's disease, an ailment that had afflicted his father and had created such anxiety in the mind of the Divine, like a self-fulfilling prophecy, it was no surprise that he should have it too.

The planets had changed. He began to spend the majority of his time visiting clinics and worrying about his health. The work in progress were transformations, executed by Isidor Bea with Dalí's trembling hand adding small details and large signatures. The last canvas I saw him working on in Port Lligat was a painting of a decaying donkey, a scene lifted from *Un Chien Andalou*, the surrealist film he had made with Luis Buñuel in 1929. Every obsession returned. «I am the concentric eccentric», he said and I thought of ripples growing smaller as they vanish to nothing. He was shrinking, shrivelling, contracting into the snail he admired and wanted to be. He talked of his childhood in Figueres, his brother who had died before he was born and who had haunted him always. The ends of his life were drawing together in a neat and perfect circle.

Dalí relinquished his residence papers for the United States at the US Consulate in Paris and was obliged to make a deal with the Spanish government over unpaid back taxes. If nothing else, it explained why his entire legacy was left to «the State». The court cases over fraudulent prints multiplied without being resolved. One time, a truck was stopped leaving Spain at the French customs with 40,000 sheets of paper, all blank except for Dalí's signature. «It is a tragedy I have such a short name. Picasso could only have signed twenty thousand», he said.

In a final, ironic twist in the Peter Moore/Dalí double-act, just as Don Salvador would spend his last years locked up as a recluse, the Captain is spending his locked up under house arrest. They will never get to the bottom of the prints' scandal, but government investigators are certain the way into the labyrinth is through the gate of the Captain's white roofed villa in Port Lligat.

King Juan Carlos made Dalí the Marqués of Pubol in 1981 and, in the early summer of 1982, the Marquesa died. The servants wrapped Gala's body in a blanket and, with Dalí following in

another car, Arturo Caminada drove her over the mountains to Pubol where she was interred in the grounds of the castle.

I went to the house and helped Paquita close the shutters and lock the doors. Dalí had left Port Lligat, the little bay he so adored, and never returned. He moved to the castle where he willed himself to die, a process that took seven long, mad, painful, denigrating years. He was waiting to join Gala in the tomb at Pubol and burying the Divine far away from her in the museum in Figueres was the greatest unkindness the authorities could have perpetrated on their illustrious, egocentric and amusing son. It is unforgivable.

## *Galería Carlos Lozano*

And so, my love. Here we are in Cadaqués.

The sky today is clear blue. Small birds circle above the cypress trees and the smell of jasmine hangs faintly on the air. Your house in Port Lligat has been turned into a museum. They had to widen some of the narrow passageways to allow access to chubby people who come on coaches that line up in shiny rows in the new car park. They push through with boils and limps, eating *bocadillos*, and pretty village girls in uniform tell flattering stories about the life and times of Don Salvador.

The *siemprevivirs* climb over the rocks you painted at Cap de Creus. Castor and Pollux wander by, dressed identically as fishermen in laced espadrilles and baggy pants. They have found their *querencia*. They paint boats and tend the olive trees. Baron Ernst sits on his balcony surrounded by dead plants while, in a play on opposites, pink geraniums clamber over the walls of Jean Levy's house across the way. We are all here, my dear.

Marsha Chase is staying with me as I stayed with her in New York last winter. I returned to Spain via Paris and spent a couple of days at the *Hôtel Meurice*. It was very quiet. Old ghosts drifted through the salon and in the gilt mirrors I kept seeing a tall Indian wearing a tailored dark suit and found it hard to believe it was me, so far from Barranquilla.

I am forty something, an age that is neither old nor young but at that point when we begin to sense the first languid odours of maturity. It is the time when the years are too many and too few for serious renegotiations with fate; the time when we see ourselves aging in the faces of our friends; in the crinkles around Amanda's eyes; in the grey swallowing Miguel Condé's beard. «The present is passing», you said. «Each moment is a precious gift. There is no

future beyond the grave».

One dark evening not long ago, two Japanese buyers appeared with a photograph of an oil painting and a desire for guidance. Was it worth \$100,000? I said no. Perhaps I was wrong. It was a fake Dalí, a very good fake, the same fake a German dealer from Frankfurt had offered me for \$50,000 four years earlier.

That day, my dear, was the last time we saw each other. My meeting with the German had been at the Ritz in Barcelona and I left by train for Figueres. I was wearing a *Hermes* tie... «the symbol of success». I haven't forgotten, Don Salvador. I haven't forgotten anything. I got into a taxi and, when I said «Cadaqués», a very curious thing happened. The word «Púbol» slipped from my mouth instead. You are always on my mind, but that day, the presence was stronger. I just had to see you. I knew you only accepted visitors by appointment. And even when people arrived with their appointments you often refused to see them. With surreal and contradictory logic, on the few occasions when I had seen you during those last years, you would grip my hand and beg me not to leave you.

I sat at your bedside. There was a pack of nurses running up and down the hall. I could hear their heels tapping on the flagstones. The room was divided by sun and shade, a Spanish scene, a scene from the bullring. The matador was dying, but it had been a fabulous fight. My hair was neatly trimmed and, with the French tie, I was wearing an Italian jacket with wide shoulders. You studied me for a long time without speaking. There was a puzzled look on your face.

«I remember your hair, Carlos», you said. «You had such beautiful hair».

I smiled. You looked so tired. Your hand was cupped in my palms, so frail, like a little bird that had fallen from its nest.

«You must always protect me», you said.

«Of course I will, my darling. Of course I will».

I leaned over and kissed you on both cheeks. You closed your eyes and went to sleep. As I sat there the shadow moved across the room, consuming the light in darkness.

## *Ghostwords*

The funeral bells tolled in Cadaqués at 10.30 on the morning of 21 July 2000.

At twelve minutes past nine as the sun was setting on Thursday 20 July, Carlos Lozano died in the hospital in Figueres, just a short walk from where Salvador Dalí lay in the *Teatro Museo*.

It was a warrior's death.

Two people were with Carlos during those final moments. Two powerful women. They were with him throughout that long last day.

Victoria Monegal, known by everyone as *Bicho* —little creature in English— is from an established Catalan family. She has businesses in Cadaqués. She is Roman Catholic. A believer. A person with strong ideas and opinions that spring from a big heart, a well of human kindness. She adored Carlos. He adored her. They had been friends for twenty years and in those last years of his debilitating illness it was *Bicho* more than anyone who fed him, who drove him to doctors and clinics, to the hairdresser in Figueres, to bus stations and airports. Carlos didn't like to miss a party. The glam. The launch of *Sex, Surrealism, Dalí and Me* at the Dalí Universe in London. The studio in Paris for an interview with Antoine de Caunes. A limo waiting at the airport.

Two hours in make-up, can you believe.

A five star hotel.

Old world. A bit tacky. But charming.

Carlos was a telephone person. He loved to talk.

On the far side of the bed, tired after her long flight from California, sat Florence Klein. She is a devotee of Guru Baba Maharajji Neem Karoli, the sect Carlos had joined during his first journey to India. With that magical and contradictory South

American dualism Salvador Dalí would have appreciated, Carlos Lozano was both, a Catholic and a follower of Eastern mysticism: Hinduism, Buddhism, Zen and Lao-tsu's The Book of Tao, Carlos embraced them all. Like Dalí, he trusted in lucky charms, magic potions, serendipity. In his gallery in Cadaqués above the telephone were two pictures, one of Saint Sebastian, patron saint of the village, the other, the identical size, was of Hanuman, the half-monkey, half-human son of the wind, so apt to Cadaqués; the monkey god carried healing herbs to the wounded of Rama's army in The Ramayana. Nothing was random. Carlos was autodidact. He read voraciously in Spanish, English and French. His mentor may have helped him along the road, but Carlos was his own creation.

Florence and Carlos had done retreats together many times and had remained friends. Carlos was always a good friend. Gay. Proud. Sophisticated. Secretive about his home and past in Barranquilla. He was bitchy one day and supportive the next. He was expansive yet easily hurt. He had the uncanny knack of putting people together and if, after putting them together, they stayed together, a little part of him would always resent it. Carlos was difficult. He was boyish, generous, oddly vulnerable. Women loved him. They wanted to look after him. Mother him. He was always fighting with his friends. Then kissing to make up. Such is friendship.

Carlos had called Florence. She was a mystery woman, unknown to those in the circle around Carlos. He knew something not even the doctors knew. He called Florence and she arrived in Spain on Tuesday 18 July.

He had been moved from a general ward to a large sunny room filled with flowers and with a view over a garden lush with roses and oleander, the frail, *luminous immorta*, the mauve creepers of bougainvillea that trail over the far walls and grow brighter in the last rays of the sun.

A nurse brought Carlos clean pyjamas. He was livid. He went red with anger. He raised his arms and his voice.

The tops and the bottoms don't match.

It was just too much. He lay there naked, refusing to dress, while the staff ran around in search of adequate apparel. You must always dress for the occasion. Carlos knew things.

Marsha Chase entered when he was properly dressed. He drew

her close and whispered in her ear. «You are the key to my heart».

What did it mean? She wasn't sure. But it was beautiful. Tears misted her eyes.

«We'll go to the mountains», she said.

«My head is fine but my body doesn't follow».

Sue Guinness arrived from the hermitage at San Sebastian. «She is a remarkable woman, always there when you need her». Carlos's words that night just six weeks before at the book launch. Sue had hosted the party, greeted the four hundred friends who came to celebrate Carlos Lozano's life. It was pure glam. A bank of photographers waited outside. The TV cameras were inside, their long black cables wriggling like snakes over the polished floor. We signed books. We ate bite-sized snacks of lobster in chocolate sauce. There was a shy midget dressed as Dalí. A tall transsexual like a giant melting watch. Half naked girls. It was a Happening.

«Now, is there anything you need?», Sue asked.

«I'd quite like some mangoes».

Carlos was climbing into the skin of Salvador Dalí. There was a glint of mischief in his eyes. It was midday, the sun blazing over Figueres.

«Oh, and some rice cakes would be nice».

And off Sue and Marsha traipsed to the market in search of mangoes and rice cakes.

Iris Gioia was kept waiting while the cleaning woman mopped the floor. «They're trying to kill me», Carlos told her in confidence. «They bring the germs in from next door and spread them all over my floor».

She gazed around the large sunny room, at the garden outside. It was perfect. Too perfect.

«It's a lovely room», she said.

«They're concerned for my privacy», he told her. She fought back a tear. He must have noticed. «You know every year we would send a postcard to Picasso: In July neither women nor snails».

«What does it mean?», she asked.

«It means...». He paused to consider and there was that saucy glint. «It means *hay millones de arlequines*».

«Dalí?».

«He was a monster. But Divine».



They were the words of Louis XIV at Dalí's funeral. Carlos was shuffling through his memory files, drawing out bits of the past to consider one last time, putting everything in order. Completing the puzzle.

Carlos had stayed with Iris at her house in Chelsea during that last trip to London. She steamed his vegetables, cooked rice and chicken, her famous pasta. He felt secure, cared for. He told everyone in Cadaqués when he returned, just to keep them on their toes.

Did he need anything now? No. The mangoes were on their way. The room was full of flowers. There was a huge bowl of lemons brought by Peter Dunham. Lemons are magical. They give out good energy. They absorb the bad. Carlos had known Peter since he was a little boy. They had worked with Dalí making statues in the garden at Port Lligat.

Rosaleen Roxburgh came with still more flowers. He held her two hands in his. An Irish blonde with lively blue eyes she has the look of an angel. Carlos saw the angel in her. He told her so. Tears rolled down her cheeks.

«Don't cry. I'm ready», he told her.

As she was leaving the room, as pragmatic as ever, he told her to wash her hands. He wanted to protect his friends.

The lemons and the mangoes and the rice cakes sat on the table, untouched. The nurse came with painkillers. Florence gripped Carlos's hand a little tighter and he waved the painkillers away. This was the beginning. The last battle. The last dance. The sun had lost its sting. Long shadows were moving like assassins through the garden outside.

Florence Klein and Victoria Monegal remained. The two women sat there. Strong. Powerful. Secure in their own beliefs. Wary of each other. When Florence first arrived, *Bicho* had told her that she had reserved Carlos a place in a nursing home.

«He can leave tomorrow».

«That won't be necessary. Carlos won't be here tomorrow».

*Bicho* now sat there with Florence's words running through her mind. Florence was chanting mantras, mysterious formulas that meant nothing to her. She said her Catholic prayers. She waited.

The sun moved over the hospital and lowered itself slowly into

the hills. The time was coming. Florence's mantras had continued without rest, repetitive, slightly hypnotic. Her chants ended and the silence was like a fall of snow.

«You are a warrior», whispered Florence.

Carlos nodded. There was colour in his cheeks. He was still extraordinarily handsome. Florence placed her hands on his chest. He closed his eyes. His stomach began to vibrate. Slowly at first. Then faster and faster. It caused a chain reaction that made his heart fibrillate. Carlos's heart was dancing. It danced and it danced. And then it stopped. Florence put her hand on his forehead. There was an uprush of air as if his soul like a rocket had taken off into the universe. A faint smile touched his lips. He opened his eyes momentarily. Then closed them for the last time.

Florence Klein had come from California to Figueres to help Carlos leave his body with dignity. And he did. Tears filled her eyes as she glanced across the bed at *Bicho*.

«Did you ever see Carlos dance? He was wonderful». She paused. Large tears were rolling down *Bicho*'s cheeks, slowly, one after the other. «He just performed his greatest dance. He died like a warrior».

*Bicho* understood. Hindu. Catholic. It didn't matter. Carlos was one with the cosmos.

In Cadaqués they chime the bells in the morning when village people die and in the afternoon those bells chime for outsiders.

The following morning, they tolled at 10.30. Carlos belonged to Cadaqués. He had, as Dalí knew, found his *querencia*.

Carlos was cremated in Figueres and his ashes were taken to India by Trish Healy and David Ortiz to be floated on the surface of the Ganges in Varanasi. They set off at dawn with a boatman who could have stepped from the pages of Siddhartha, Herman Hesse's book, one of Carlos's favourites. The boatman was old and beautiful in a pink shirt with a matching pink dot between his eyes, his long white turban falling in graceful folds about his shoulders. Trish and David had offerings of flowers, which they set down in the water with a flaming torch. As the offerings moved away on the flow, the boatman asked them to close their eyes and they said a prayer. When the boat reached a holy place, a special place known by the boatman, Trish Healy stood. She allowed the ashes to drift slowly

from the urn and they watched them rise into the air and settle on the river and become one with the infinite.

The pretty church in Cadaqués had been completely full for the funeral service. It was a simple affair. Carlos's mother, Tesoro Lozano, and his sister, Mary Peatrowsky, had arrived from the United States. There were friends. Hundreds of friends. It made his family proud. The priest told amusing stories. He said kind things. And he meant them. He, too was a friend. Stasia Gelber reminded us all that warm evening that Cadaqués will never again be quite the same. «You were one of the great personalities of the village. You are central to the Cadaqués myth. At each corner, for a long time, we will still see you: slender, elegant, smiling. And so, somewhere, somehow, you will stay with us».

Of course. He will remain with me always. In each corner that we look in Cadaqués. In the memory of us working together. As a book that sits upon the shelf. Carlos Lozano was a poor boy from the barrios of Barranquilla. He became the intimate friend of one the twentieth century's most important artists and earned a respected place as an international art dealer. It was a fabulous journey.

CLIFFORD THURLOW  
London, September 2000



Carlos posing at Cledalique



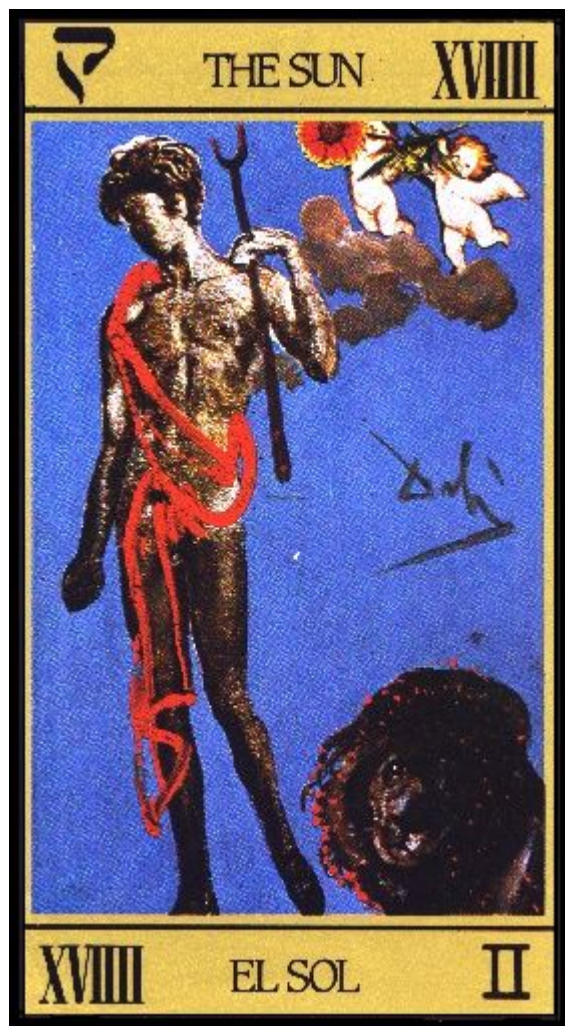
Carlos outside Dali's house in Port Lligat



Dalí at work



Dalí alone and with Gala



Carlos from Dalí's Tarot

## Acknowledgements

It was a long hot August in Cadaqués and *Sex, Surrealism, Dalí and Me* was sliding slowly from the laptop. Summer and writing doesn't really mix. Actually, writing and just about anything doesn't really mix.

Cadaqués, a little fishing village on the Costa Brava, is home to writers and artists and, just as in Dalí's day, the summer washes up all sorts of adventurers willing to brave the serpentine tracks that wind through the hills and unfurl at the sea. That year we bumped into Hal Landers, who had appeared from nowhere with his beautiful Estonian wife Urve and proceeded to make everyone's life a far more interesting affair than we had ever imagined.

Hal was a giant of a man—all five feet five inches of him. To be in his company was like taking off on the back of a charging elephant, destination unknown. The producer of numerous films, including *Death Wish*, a one-time actor and art connoisseur, he took an interest in everything, including our book. He read the first couple of chapters and then started appearing each day hungry for more. His enthusiasm was as big as his heart and he made us believe in ourselves. Sadly, Hal Landers died before seeing the book in print, but his encouragement and good humour was enough to keep us out of the bars and back at the laptop.

Thanks Hal Landers, wherever you are. You're sorely missed.

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CLIFFORD THURLOW (born 1952, in London, England) trained as a journalist after failing to get a place at Cambridge and wrote his first book at the age of 23. He has been described by Penny Wark of *The Times* as «one of the UK's best ghostwriters».

Thurlow is noted for creating memoirs in the style of a novel. Recent books are *Fatwa: Living With A Death Threat* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2005), which describes the flight of Jacky Trevane across the desert with two children to escape an abusive husband; *Today I'm Alice* (Sidgwick & Jackson, 2009) the story of Multiple Personality Disorder survivor Alice Jamieson, a *Sunday Times* Top Ten best-seller; and two books set in Iraq with former infantry captain turned mercenary James Ashcroft, *Escape From Baghdad* (Virgin, 2009), the rescue of Ashcroft's former Iraqi interpreter and his family from Shia Death Squads; and *Making A Killing* (Virgin, 2006) —on which Andy Martin wrote in *The Daily Telegraph*: «Ashcroft must have formed a good working alliance with ghostwriter Clifford Thurlow, because this diary of death and destruction radiates not just personality but that elusive, lyrical honesty the existentialists used to call authenticity».